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THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN MILTON.

LUDLOW CASTLE,

The scene of the first performance of Comus, a Mask.

T. NELSON AND SONS, LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN MILTON.

With Illustrations by E. H. Corbould and John Gilbert.

Is not each great, each amiable Muse
Of classic ages in our MILTON met?
A genius universal as his theme:
Astonishing as Chaos; as the bloom
Of blowing Eden fair; as Heaven sublime.

THOMSON.

LONDON:
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

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LIFE OF JOHN MILTON.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LABOURS.

JOHN MILTON was born in Bread Street, in the city of London, December 9, 1608. He was descended of an ancient family of that name at *Milton*, near Abingdon, in Oxfordshire, where there still exists a monument of the family in the parish church. During the bloody contests between the Houses of York and Lancaster, his ancestors allied themselves to the weaker side, and nearly all the family estates were forfeited. The father of Milton was a man of considerable ability, a great proficient in music, and by profession a scrivener—an honourable occupation at that period, and one by which he speedily acquired a considerable fortune. His parents were bigotedly attached to the Romish faith; and upon his abjuring its errors, and embracing the Protestant religion, he was disinherited by them.

Johnson begins his biography by remarking, that the life of Milton has been already written in so many forms, and with such minute inquiry, that a new one is almost superfluous; yet with all this, the account that has been preserved of his early years is so meagre, as scarcely to present a single characteristic incident.

Doubtless, under the instructions of a father who had suffered for conscience-sake, Milton early acquired those high views of civil and religious liberty which he advocated so strenuously throughout the whole period of his life. His mother also is said to have been "a woman of incomparable

virtue and goodness," so that he enjoyed the highest advantages of domestic education and example. He early exhibited a lively fancy, and quick powers of perception; his progress in every department of knowledge within his reach was so rapid as to outstrip the efforts of his instructors. Even at the premature age of twelve he manifested such a thirst for learning that it required restraint rather than encouragement, and he seldom forsook his studies till midnight.

Milton's father was himself a student of Oxford, and he early destined his son for a scholar. His education was at first pursued at home, under the care of Thomas Young, a Puritan, who was afterwards appointed chaplain to the English merchants at Hamburgh. The opinions of his tutor would tend to confirm him in the views already inculcated by his father; and this may in some degree furnish a clue to his public life, and the unchanging hostility he afterwards manifested to the intolerance of the established government in Church and State.

From the instructions of his domestic tutor, young Milton passed to St. Paul's School, and from thence, at the age of fifteen, he proceeded to Christ's College, Cambridge, there to acquire the higher branches of education. Even thus early he gave evidence of his poetic genius, and during the first two years of his residence at Cambridge, he composed his poem on the Gunpowder Plot, with other productions in verse, that have led an eminent critic to say of him—"Milton's writings show him to have been a man from his childhood." There he continued his studies till he attained his twenty-fourth year; when, having taken his degree of Master of Arts, he finally quitted the university, carrying with him the esteem and admiration of all who knew him.

After visiting London for a short period, he retired to his father's estate at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, and there he spent the greater portion of the next five years of his life, occupied with the study of the ancient classics, and the finest works of modern European literature, and giving full play to all the powers of his fine intellect, amid the sweet scenes of rural retirement—a period of literary leisure and quiet domestic enjoyment, that may justly be regarded as the happiest of his life. He inherited from his father a passionate

love of music, which afforded him the means of pleasing relaxation; and long after, when shut out for ever from the light of day, it solaced the declining years of the great poet.

During this period of quiet seclusion, Milton gave up his mind to the delightful task of poetic composition, and furnished in the Mask of Comus a splendid record of the early development of his poetic genius in all its power. This Mask was represented by the Lady Alice Egerton and her brothers, the younger members of the Earl of Bridgewater's family, at Ludlow Castle, on Michaelmas Eve, 1634. The story is stated by Symmons to have been suggested by the circumstance of the Lady Alice having been separated from her company in the night, and having wandered alone for some time in the forest of Haywood, as she was returning from a distant visit, to meet her father, on his taking possession of his newly intrusted sceptre, as President of Wales. The composition and acting of masks were favourite amusements of some of the greatest men of the best era of English literature, and even the character of Comus had been introduced already by Ben Jonson and others; but none of them surpasses this in its richness of poetic thought and fine chaste simplicity. The high estimation it secured is best shown by the fact of so many of its lines having become as it were the current change of thought, so that thousands who now use them are unconscious of their source. This is no less characteristic of all the poetic productions of this period of retirement;—the Arcades, the Lycidas, L'Allegro, and Il Penseroso, were all written within these five years; and the reader who peruses them for the first time will be astonished to find how familiar he already is with many of their finest thoughts, which have excited such universal sympathy and admiration, that they have become common household words throughout the land.

Milton had long wished to improve his knowledge by observing the customs and institutions of other countries; the death of his mother in 1637, by removing one of the strongest domestic ties, seems to have set him at liberty to prosecute his favourite object; and, accordingly, he obtained his father's consent in the following year, and proceeded on a European tour. He received at this time a friendly letter

of advice from the celebrated Sir Henry Wotton, formerly ambassador to the Republic of Venice, in which he intimates his knowledge of the authorship of Comus, adding, "that he had seen yet nothing parallel to it in our language."

On his arrival at Paris, he was introduced by Lord Scudamore to the celebrated Grotius, then ambassador from Christina, Queen of Sweden. The French capital, however, seems to have possessed few attractions for him; and, after a very brief stay, he proceeded on his route, visiting Nice, Genoa, Pisa, and Florence. The last city excited his liveliest admiration. The place, the language and manners of the people, and the interesting circle of literary men to whom he was introduced, all afforded him a high source of gratification. He continued there above two months, and afterwards kept up frequent correspondence with several eminent men of learning, to whom he had been introduced.

From Florence he proceeded to Rome, which impressed his mind as strongly by its decaying monuments of the past, as Florence did by its living beauty; there also he was at once admitted to the society of the most learned men of the day, and derived the highest gratification from the rich stores of classical learning which were thrown open to him in the library of the Vatican.

After visiting Naples, he was preparing to continue his travels through Sicily and Greece, when the news of the state of affairs at home, just then tending to the outbreak of the first civil war, induced him to direct his course homeward, "deeming it," says his nephew, "a thing unworthy of him to be diverting himself in security abroad, when his countrymen were contending with an insidious monarch for their liberty." On his way home he again spent some time both at Rome and Florence, though against the advice of some friends, who feared he had rendered himself obnoxious to the machinations of the Romanists by the free expressions of his opinions. It little coincided with the courage and nobleness of his mind, either to shun such danger, or, by a line of duplicity, to avoid such offence. Without courting controversy, he never hesitated freely to express opinions when circumstances seemed to require it, and, though not without some danger, he returned home in safety, with his mind stored with enlarged

views, and his imagination filled with the grandeur and beauty derived from beholding the noble remains of ancient Rome, and the most splendid creations of modern art. He had visited and conversed with the great Galileo, then a prisoner in the Inquisition, and, in spite of his religion, and the bold expression of his opinions, he had formed lasting friendships with some of the most eminent men in the south of Europe, and had received from all marks of honour and esteem.

After an absence of about fifteen months, Milton arrived in England, just as Charles I. was setting out on his second expedition against the Scots. On his return, he undertook the education of two of his nephews; and soon after he was induced by some of his friends to admit their sons to the same privilege. On this Dr. Johnson remarks, "Let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and small performance: on the man who hastens home because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and when he reaches the scene of action, vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding-school." This unworthy sneer is easily confuted. Milton knew his own intellectual powers too well—even had he possessed the necessary bodily strength—to imagine that the only, or even the most useful, course that lay open for him in the cause of liberty, was the profession of arms; and his labours with his pen during the long continuance of the contest, afford the best evidence that he lent his energies with no grudging hand to the cause of liberty.

They must be very ignorant of the history of England at this period, who imagine that Milton was avoiding the post of danger in thus taking up the pen as his weapon of war. Laud had already organized that systematic persecution of the Puritans, which, by the cruel lawlessness with which it was pursued, needed the evils of a revolution to wipe away the stain from the nation; and the unhappy king, with his high notions of prerogative, had abundantly shown that he would permit no law to stand between him and his opponents. The cruelties enforced by the Star-Chamber on such victims as Prynne, Bastwick, and Leighton, may afford some conception of the dangers that Milton voluntarily dared in

returning to his country, and thus boldly defending his opinions at such a time.

From his efforts for the removal of ecclesiastical grievances, he next applied himself to secure the liberty of the press. He had already set at defiance the law's restrictions on its just freedom, and now he exposed with masterly vigour the evils engendered by its thraldom. In this noble work the passage occurs in which he speaks of Galileo, a victim of the same system that denied the free expression of opinions, against which he was now contending. "There it was, in Italy," says he, "that I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner in the Inquisition for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought. And though I knew that England was groaning loudest under the prelatic yoke, nevertheless I took it for a pledge of future happiness, that other nations were so persuaded of her liberty. Yet was it beyond my hope, that those worthies who were then breathing in her air, should be her leaders to such a deliverance as shall never be forgotten by any revolution of time that this world hath to finish."

It was not till a second revolution had finally banished the Stuarts from the throne, that the press was freed from the trammels under which it had been so long restrained, and left to develop its mighty energies for the national well-being.

CHAPTER II.

POLITICAL LIFE.

AT the age of thirty-five, Milton married Mary, the daughter of Richard Powell, a wealthy royalist, and justice of the peace in Oxfordshire. No account is preserved of the circumstances that led to this union; but it proved unhappy, and gave rise to incidents in his life which the biographer would gladly omit. They had only been married a month when the young bride sought permission to spend the rest of the summer with her friends in Oxfordshire. The request is scarcely less singular than the immediate compliance it met

with. The period of Michaelmas was fixed for her return, but she came not; and repeated letters from her husband were even left unanswered. Milton then sent a messenger, demanding her immediate return home, when she at length positively refused to come, dismissing his messenger with contempt. From all that appears, the probability seems to be that the fault lay more with her relatives than herself; they seem to have sanctioned the marriage with the zealous republican when their party appeared to be on the wane, and to have repented of the match when a temporary success of the royalists had revived their hopes, the haughty cavaliers being probably somewhat ashamed of an alliance with one who took so active a part against royalty. This at least may be concluded, that she was a young and frivolous girl, little fitted to be the companion of such a man. The reasons assigned in her defence abundantly confirm this: it is stated that she had been accustomed to a great deal of company, with merriment and dancing, so that she found her married life solitary and irksome, and at length went home to her parents.

Whatever were the reasons for her departure, all attempts of Milton to prevail on her to return proved ineffectual; and, with a just feeling of indignation, he declared that he no longer held her as his wife. This occurrence set him seriously to consider the nature of those obligations involved in the marriage tie, in consequence of which he published his work on the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, which led him into various controversies, conducted on his part with his usual energy.

Fully four years elasped without Milton meeting with his wife, and he had taken the most decided steps to show his conviction that all ties between them were dissolved. Time, however, had led her to repent of her foolish step; and learning of his intention to visit a common friend, she suddenly presented herself before him, and throwing herself at his feet, with tears besought his forgiveness. A perfect reconciliation took place between them; and so completely did he overlook all that had passed, that he soon after received into his own house her father and mother, and several of her brothers and sisters, affording them an asylum there, and exerting all his

political influence in their behalf, when they were involved in the final overthrow of the royal cause.

The pen of Milton was again called into requisition on a subject of the highest public value. He put forth his "Treatise on Education," a work intended to strike at the root of the prevalent system of employing the whole time and energies of the youthful mind in mastering one or two dead languages. Fully two centuries have since elapsed, but so slow is the mass of mankind in receiving the wisdom of its great teacher, that we are only now beginning to apply the sound suggestions which he so eloquently enforced.

Within a year after his reunion with his wife, his family was increased by the birth of a daughter, Anne, the eldest of his children, who was lame either from her birth, or in consequence of some accident in her early infancy. His second daughter, Mary, was born in the same large house in the Barbican, which had sufficed to accommodate his numerous train of dependent relatives. Shortly after their departure, he quitted this house for a smaller one in Holborn, opening into Lincoln's Inn Fields; and there he continued to reside, closely engaged in a variety of studies, till his acceptance of the office of Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth rendered a situation nearer Whitehall an object of convenience to him.

In 1649 the grand climax of successive civil wars was at length accomplished in the death of the king. Milton was in no way implicated in this act of judicial judgment by the popular leaders on their king; but he viewed with disgust the lamentations of the Presbyterian party for the final accomplishment of the result which they had so long laboured to bring about; and to meet the exigences of the period, he published his "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates." "This work," he says, "was not published till after the death of the king, and was written rather to tranquillize the minds of men, than to discuss any part of the question respecting Charles—a question the decision of which belonged to the magistrate, and not to me, and which had now received its final determination."

During Milton's residence in his new apartments in Scotland Yard, his third child, a son, was born, but he only survived a few months. From this he removed, in 1652, to a handsome house opening into St. James's Park, adjoining the

mansion of Lord Scudamore; and here he continued to reside till the Restoration.

Charles, the son of the late king, anxious to appeal to the courts of Europe against the judgment of the people of England, employed, as his advocate, Salmasius, an honorary professor in the University of Leyden. It would have been difficult for Charles readily to have found a foreigner at this period well qualified for the task; but in his choice he seems to have been peculiarly unfortunate. This man, though possessed of great erudition and considerable critical acumen, was altogether destitute of those practical talents that were needed for the work imposed on him; and, above all, he was utterly ignorant of the facts and bearings of the question he thus undertook to exhibit in its true light to others; so that he was entirely dependent for his materials on the prejudiced representations of the ruined cavaliers.

In reply to the work thus produced, Milton published in 1651, his "Defence of the People of England," giving in it one of the noblest instances of self-sacrifice that ever patriotism offered. He had already greatly injured his eyes by his protracted studies, and his physicians now assured him that unless he abandoned this labour, he must lose his sight. "On this occasion," says Milton, replying to an antagonist who had made his blindness a reproach, "I reflected that many had purchased with a superior evil a lighter good, glory with death;—to me, on the contrary, greater good was purchased with an inferior evil; so that by incurring blindness alone, I might fulfil the most honourable of all duties."

The unanimous voice of the Council had called him to this work, and the reception it met with on the continent was such as might have satisfied the highest ambition;—enemies no less than friends manifested their sense of its power. It was publicly burned at Paris and Toulouse. It was translated into Dutch for the special benefit of the countrymen of Salmasius, to his own extreme vexation; and while the States-General ordered its suppression as a national disgrace, its author received the highest encomiums from the most eminent men in Europe. Queen Christina of Sweden especially marked her admiration of this work; but, above all, it completely accomplished the purpose for which it was written,

so that Milton's unfortunate opponent was utterly overwhelmed in the encounter. He possessed all the extravagant vanity of a pedant, and must have felt with proportionate acutness his humiliating overthrow. Even his own friends made it matter of complaint that his work was never heard of, while his antagonist's reply was the theme of interest to every court of Europe.

Europe, indeed, seemed to be astonished at the genius thus displayed by one unknown before, and whose work did not win its way to public estimation by the gradual steps of a literary fame, but burst upon it at once with a blaze of splendour. "The scholars of Europe," says Symmons, "actuated by a similar spirit with the spectators of the old Olympian games, threw garlands on the conqueror of Salmasius;" and the ambassadors then in London acknowledged the universal estimation of the author by official visits.

Salmasius laboured without success to produce an answer to this masterly defence. He died in 1653, the victim, as was generally believed, of wounded pride, leaving it unfinished; and when at length the fragment was published, the people of England had reversed their judgment by a "*glorious restoration;*" and it was as useless as it was dangerous for Milton to reply.

CHAPTER III.

HIS BLINDNESS.

On the 2d of May 1652, Milton's family was increased by another daughter, at the cost of her mother's life. The account of his nephew affords abundant evidence that Milton, in receiving back his wife to that place in his home which she had so rashly forfeited, with the generosity of a noble mind, buried the past in oblivion, though she was probably no help-meet for such a man. Yet their domestic life had been the source of endearing ties; and now, when suddenly bereft of her society, and left with three orphan daughters, his solitude was rendered the more painful by the rapid advances of blindness.

His mind must have been long prepared for this trying affliction. In a letter to a friend about this period, he says: "It is about ten years, I think, since I perceived my sight to grow weak and dim;" and he adds that the sight of one eye had almost entirely disappeared fully three years before the other was much affected. That which his physicians had foretold was now rapidly hastening to its fatal accomplishment, but he repined not at the irreparable loss. He had fallen as the good soldier falls, foremost in the battle-field in his country's cause, and he considered that no unworthy shrine whereon to lay so costly a sacrifice. As a Christian, he bore the privation with noble fortitude; as a patriot, with the just consciousness of having deserved well of his country—a debt still unpaid; for England, proud of the Poet whom the world reveres, has shrunk from the acknowledgment of the Patriot's claims; and the monument that bears his name in Westminster Abbey is more a memorial of its titled donor than a tribute to the memory of England's gifted son.

"It is not miserable to be blind," says Milton, with calm dignity, in reply to one of his heartless antagonists. "He only is miserable who cannot acquiesce in his blindness with fortitude; and why should I repine at a calamity which every man's mind ought to be so prepared and disciplined as to be able to undergo with patience—a calamity to which every man by the condition of his nature is liable, and which I know to have been the lot of some of the greatest and best of my species?"

So completely unimpaired were his energies, that he continued till the Restoration to dictate all the most important foreign correspondence of the Commonwealth. In this high office he took an active share in the foreign policy of Cromwell, which, whatever be the opinion formed of the Protectorate as the government of a free people, is universally acknowledged to have elevated England to the highest rank among the kingdoms of Europe—to have made her respected and feared wherever she was known. Milton penned the indignant remonstrance that stayed the sword of persecution against the helpless Protestants of Piedmont, as well as the sonnet that records their sufferings. He conducted the bold correspondence that set at defiance the haughty bigotry of Spain;

and Johnson closes his narrative of this period of his life in these terms:—"His agency was considered as of great importance; for when a treaty with Sweden was artfully suspended, the delay was publicly imputed to Milton's indisposition; and the Swedish agent was provoked to express his wonder that only one man in England could write Latin, and that man blind."

Like other great geniuses, Milton appears to have sought relaxation only in a change of mental labour. His habit was to devote as many hours each day to intense study as his faculties could bear, and he now engaged in this manner on three great works:—a Latin Dictionary, which, though never published, served as the basis of one afterwards issued from the Cambridge press; a History of England; and his great epic poem.

The dependent situation in which he was now placed by the loss of his sight, and with a young family around him, which his studious habits were alone sufficient to have incapacitated him from taking any charge of, speedily induced him to marry again. He chose as his second wife, Catherine, the daughter of Captain Woodcock, a zealous republican. She proved a most tender and affectionate wife, and Milton seems to have been devotedly attached to her; but their happiness was destined to be of very brief duration. Within the year of their marriage she gave birth to a daughter, and very soon followed her to the grave.

In 1657, he was joined in his office of Latin Secretary by his friend, Andrew Marvell; and after his severe affliction, he seems to have withdrawn into the closest retirement, only visiting the court or government offices when absolutely called thither by his public duties. He was equally silent as an author for several years. In a letter, written the year before Cromwell's death, to a young friend in Holland, who had besought his influence for him in some public matter, he says, "I have very few familiars with the *gratiosi* of the court, who keep myself almost wholly at home, and am willing to do so."

Milton seems to have felt at this period that the time for using his pen in behalf of the Commonwealth was past. Notwithstanding all that has been said on the subject by political

opponents and injudicious apologists, there seems no reason to think that Milton disapproved of the general policy of Cromwell. He willingly lent his services till the close of the Protectorate, and he was not the man to co-operate in a government he deemed inimical to the true interests of his country. During the convulsions that succeeded, the probability of his writing being productive of any benefit was still more doubtful, and he remarked on it in a letter to an old pupil, —"My country does not now stand in need of a person to record her intestine commotions, but of one qualified to bring them to an auspicious conclusion."

The crisis that seemed rapidly approaching, at length urged him to make a last effort in the cause of liberty; and he published, almost immediately before the Restoration had been determined on by the leaders that now assumed the government, an eloquent remonstrance against abandoning "this goodly tower of a Commonwealth which they had begun to build," fortelling in strong language what proved to be the consequences of restoring the hereditary claimant to the throne. But the courageous effort in behalf of his favourite scheme of a Republic was addressed to unwilling ears. General Monk had already taken his resolution, and this display of Milton's patriot zeal was made in vain.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESTORATION.

General Monk having perfected his arrangements, and the parliament concluded their negotiations with Charles II. at Breda, Milton was discharged from his office as Latin secretary. He was compelled to secrete himself for a time in a friend's house in St. Bartholomew Close until the first burst of vindictive rage in the triumphant royalists was past; and the more effectually to screen him from the search that would otherwise have been instituted, his friends spread a report of his death, and, assembling in mournful procession, followed his supposed corpse to the grave. On the king afterwards

learning of this device, it is said to have afforded him much mirth, and he commended his policy "in escaping death by a seasonable show of dying."

In this concealment he remained safe, while some of his old friends expiated their alleged offences by bloody execution, and other cruel indignities, as *regicides*. Even his public funeral did not stay the issue of a proclamation for his arrest, though it probably prevented any further search. The parliament endeavoured to testify their loyalty hy ordering the Attorney-General to commence a prosecution against him; and immediately before the passing of the general Act of Oblivion, his two books, the "Eiconoclastes," and the "Defence of the People," were publicly burnt by the common hangman. The same had been done to the latter work long before at Paris; and now the unfinished reply of Salmasius was published, to crown the whole; it may well be believed only exciting a smile in him against whom these annoyances were directed.

Fortunately for the honour of England, the name of Milton was not included in the list of exceptions to the Act of Oblivion; and, accordingly, on its passing, he left his place of concealment, where he had continued nearly four months, only three days after the burning of his writings.

He was arrested on his appearance by the obsequious parliament, but released after a time on the payment of costly fees. From this time till his death, he interfered no more in politics, though ever faithful to his cause; he withdrew entirely into private life, content, like Bacon, to leave his reputation to the judgment of posterity.

He had on many occasions exercised his influence during the period of the Commonwealth, in acts of generosity and benevolence to the discomfited royalists. Sir William Davenant, the poet-laureate of Charles, owed his life to his intercession, and it became a grateful act of gratitude to use his influence in returning the favour. But from this period the few friends of the blind old man seem to have been found among those who, having sympathized with him in his high aspirations for the people's liberty, now mourned over the dissolute excesses in which every hope of it was being swept away.

The account furnished by Aubrey as to the periods at which

he wrote the Paradise Lost, is further corroborated both by external and internal evidence. According to him, it was begun two years before the restoration of the king, and finished about three years after that event. It formed his solace and occupation during these months of concealment, to which a passage in the seventh book is, with much probability, supposed to allude.

Released, however, as we have seen, from his anxious durance, he withdrew to a small house in the Artillery Walk, near Bunhill Fields; a humble dwelling, suited to his reduced circumstances, where he continued to reside during the remainder of his life.

The poet, now experiencing the premature advances of age, with his name held up to public scorn, his hopes blighted, and his means of support withdrawn, had yet added to all these the bitterness of ungrateful children. His two elder daughters seem to have been destitute alike of affection and pity; and he who was, from his infirmities, so peculiarly dependent on domestic enjoyments, found there his sharpest sorrows. Such circumstances must almost have compelled him to seek again to supply their undutiful neglect by marriage; and, accordingly, shortly after this, in his fifty-fourth year, he married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshall, the daughter of a gentleman in Cheshire. He is said to have formed this attachment on the recommendation of his friend, Dr. Paget, an eminent physician of the city, to whom the lady was related.

The marriage was probably rather dictated by prudence and mutual respect than any deeper feelings; but Aubrey, to whom she was personally known, mentions her as "a gentle person, of a peaceful and agreeable humour." Her memory deserves to be had in grateful remembrance by the admirers of the great poet; she alleviated his sufferings, soothed his cares, and proved to him a tender and affectionate wife.

It is painful to reflect on this great and good man needing a protector against his own daughters; and with those who have proved so ready to avail themselves of every means of blasting his reputation, and casting a shadow around his great name, this has not been overlooked as a source of defamation. But there is some satisfaction in knowing that he had, in his youngest daughter, Deborah, one dutiful and favourite child,

who deemed it no cruelty to be required to read to her blind father, or pen for him his immortal works.

The discovery of Milton's will, which had been long sought in vain, brought to light interesting information regarding his domestic life, exhibiting the suffering to which he was subjected by the ingratitude of those most bound to alleviate his misfortunes; while it brings out his own disposition in a remarkably pleasing and amiable light. It may in some degree account for the conduct of the daughters—though it cannot be an excuse for it—that they were early left without a mother, and their father from studious habits and his official duties, as well as his early loss of sight, was unable to take any charge of them, so that they may have been exposed to injurious influence from those around them. But, however it may be accounted for, their freatment of their father is proved to have been most heartless and cruel.

The will was set aside from some technical objection, and owing to the litigation consequent on its being disputed, a collection of evidence relating to its author has been preserved, of an unusually minute and interesting character. A servant gives evidence that her deceased master, a little before his marriage, had lamented to her the ingratitude and cruelty of his children; and it is shown that they had defrauded him in a way that must have been doubly felt by him, not only overreaching him in the economy of the house, but disposing of his books, and often bartering them with the hucksters at the door for any trifle they might offer.

We have already seen the dangers to which Milton was exposed at the Restoration, and abundant evidence exists to show that the rancorous feelings of the royalists followed him till his death; that they exulted over him in his poverty, and rejoiced at his sufferings as marks of the special vengeance of God, and a doom worse than the axe he had escaped.

The following story has been preserved, exhibiting this in a very characteristic manner:—

The Duke of York, afterwards James II., expressed one day to the king, his brother, a great desire to see old Milton, of whom he had heard so much. The king replied that he had not the slightest objection to the duke's satisfying his curiosity; and, accordingly soon afterwards, James went pri-

vately to Milton's house, where, after an introduction, which explained to the old republican the rank of his guest, a free conversation ensued between these very dissimilar and discordant characters. In the course, however, of the conversation, the duke asked Milton whether he did not regard the loss of his eyesight as a judgment inflicted on him for what he had written against the late king. Milton's reply was to this effect: "If your highness thinks that the calamities which befall us here are indications of the wrath of heaven, in what manner are we to account for the fate of the king, your father? The displeasure of heaven must, upon this supposition, have been much greater against him than me—for I have only lost my eyes, but he lost his head."

Much discomposed by this answer, the duke speedily took his leave. On his return to court, the first words which he spoke to the king were, "Brother, you are greatly to blame that you don't have that old rogue Milton hanged." "Why, what is the matter, James? Have you seen Milton?" "Yes," answered the duke, "I have seen him." "Well," said the king, "in what condition did you find him?" "Condition! why, he is old and very poor." "Old and poor! Well, and he is blind too—is he not?" "Yes, blind as a beetle." "Why, then," observed the king, "you are a fool, James, to have him hanged as a punishment: to hang him will be doing him a service; it will be taking him out of his miseries. No; if he is old, poor, and blind, he is miserable enough; in all conscience, let him live."

The story is so consistent throughout, and so characteristic of the different dispositions of the parties, that it bears internal evidence of authenticity, and exhibits very strikingly the gay and gloomy malignity of the two royal brothers, Charles and James.

CHAPTER V.

PARADISE LOST.

THE labours of Milton, altogether independent of his great Epic, were such as must have rendered his memory an object of interest to after ages; but his immortal poem, as we have

seen, was the object of his life, from which he turned only at the call of duty, and when the circumstances of his country summoned him to enlist his gifted mind in the cause of freedom.

His last wife, who survived him, in a state of widowhood, nearly fifty-five years, has recorded interesting information as to its progress. She states that her husband composed principally in the winter; and on his waking in the morning, would make her write down sometimes twenty or thirty verses. His natural disposition inclined him to deep and earnest study, and the loss of his sight must have greatly increased his proneness to contemplation, and indeed compelled him to find therein his chief enjoyment. His circumstances latterly precluded him from engaging a permanent assistant in the capacity of a private secretary, which was the only means that could have supplied in any measure his great loss. We find him, accordingly, subjected to many difficulties, and compelled to treasure his compositions in his memory until chance afforded him the aid of some friendly transcriber. The petty calls of daily domestic duties in his scanty household must have frequently broken in upon the rapt fervour of poetic thought, when he sought the aid of his wife's willing pen. A lively illustration is afforded of these difficulties, in the postscript to a Latin letter addressed to Heimbach, an accomplished German: "Let me obtain from you this favour, that if you find any parts of this incorrectly written, you will impute it to the boy who writes for me, who is utterly ignorant of Latin, and to whom I am forced (wretchedly enough) to repeat every single syllable that I dictate."

He often made considerable pauses in the progress of his great work, doubtless sometimes occasioned by such difficulties, but also from that preference for the winter season to which his wife alludes. His nephew Philips, to whom we are indebted for an interesting and incidental narrative, remarks: "I had the perusal of the Paradise Lost from the very beginning—for some years as I went from time to time to visit him—in parcels of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time; which, being written by whatever hand came next, might possibly want correction as to the orthography and pointing. Having, as the summer came on, not been shown any for a

considerable while, and desiring the reason thereof, I was answered that his vein never happily flowed but from the autumnal equinox to the vernal."

It is a curious fact in the history of the great Epic, that, when completely prepared for the press, it narrowly escaped suppression from the ignorance or malice of the licenser. This office, which had been abolished during the Protectorate, was restored by Charles II. Under the new regulations, poetry came within the province of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the fate of the Paradise Lost was accordingly committed to the judgment of the Rev. Thomas Tomkyns, one of his chaplains. The reverend licenser was doubtless prepared to find treason in every line, and speedily pounced on a well-known passage in the first book, as containing *treason* in its most malignant form :—

> "——As when the sun new risen
> Looks through the horizontal misty air
> Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon
> In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
> On half the nations, and with fear of change
> Perplexes monarchs."

The particulars of this fortunate escape from so dangerous an obstruction have not been preserved; but much as we may now be disposed to smile at the absurd objection, the world has cause to rejoice that party malice and rancour did not succeed in strangling the immortal poem in its birth.

Milton was accustomed, as we have already mentioned, to employ his daughters to read to him, as well as to transcribe from his dictation; but on their expressing dislike to such occupations in the service of their blind father, he at once dispensed with their assistance, and set them to learn the working of embroidery in gold and silver—an art which, at that time, formed one of the chief employments of females of rank and fortune. From that time forward, he always engaged some young man for this honourable service. Shortly after his last marriage, his kind friend, Dr. Paget, who had been his adviser in the choice of a wife, introduced to him the amiable but singular Thomas Ellwood, who added to the most conscientious adherence to the tenets and practices of the Quakers, an ardent thirst for learning, and a keen relish for poetry.

We are indebted to him for some interesting notices of Milton, which occur in his minute history of his own life. Ellwood, at this time about three-and-twenty, was the son of a justice of the peace in Oxfordshire, who, from motives of economy, took him early from school. After several years had been wasted in this forced idleness, he adopted with great zeal the novel tenets of Quakerism, submitting to much cruel treatment from his father, as well as to long and severe imprisonments at different periods of his life, on account of his religious opinions. By the mediation of Dr. Paget, he obtained access to Milton, and engaged to read him to such authors as he desired.

The object of Ellwood in seeking this introduction, was to increase the scanty share of learning his father's mercenary conduct had permitted him to acquire. He accordingly devoted a portion of each day to reading aloud such Latin authors as Milton wished to hear read; and the gentleness and courtesy with which the latter condescended to all his difficulties, and sought to make their intercourse profitable to his young friend, manifest how strangely the native kindness of his disposition has been falsified by those who represent him as harsh and morose. But their intercourse experienced many painful interruptions; long sickness, on one occasion, and successive arbitrary imprisonments subsequently endured by Ellwood, separated them; so that learning, as the poor youth remarks, was almost a forbidden fruit to him.

During the prevalence of the plague in London in 1665, Ellwood manifested his gratitude to his instructor, by obtaining for him a pleasant little cottage at Chalfont, in Buckinghamshire, near to which he was then engaged in the capacity of tutor in a wealthy Quaker's family. On his first visit to Milton in this new retreat, he was shown the manuscript of the Paradise Lost.

On their next interview after Ellwood had "modestly and freely" expressed his opinion, he adds, "I pleasantly said to him, Thou hast said much here of Paradise Lost, but what hast thou to say of Paradise Found?" Nothing more was said on this subject at the time; but when, at a later period, in London, Milton showed him the Paradise Regained, he added, "This is owing to you, for you put it into my head by

the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I had not thought of."

The first edition of the Paradise Lost was published in 1665, the author receiving, as is well known, the sum of five pounds for his immortal work, with a further condition of receiving fifteen pounds more, should it reach a third edition! Whatever be the feelings of sorrow or indignation with which his admirers may now regard this fact, it is to the honour of his countrymen, that in defiance of the prejudices and personal enmity of his contemporaries, its sale was rapid, and the admiration it excited almost universal. Some of the most eminent men of his time addressed to him the highest eulogies; and its first announcement to the world, as related by Richardson, was worthy of its pre-eminent worth. Sir John Denman, a man distinguished as a soldier, a senator, and a poet, entered the House of Commons with a proof sheet of Milton's work, wet from the press, and exclaimed, "This is part of the noblest poem that ever was written in any language or in any age;" and Dryden's exclamation on first seeing it was no less pithy —"This man cuts us all out, and the ancients too!"

With the close of his great life-work, this biographical sketch may be ended. Ere the first edition of his poem had been sold, he was numbered with the mighty dead. "With a dissolution so easy that it was unperceived by the persons in his bed-chamber, he closed a life, clouded indeed by uncommon and various calamities, yet ennobled by the constant exercise of such rare endowments, as render his name, perhaps, the very first in that radiant and comprehensive list, of which England, the most fertile of countries in the produce of mental power, has reason to be proud."

His funeral was attended by "all his learned and great friends in London, not without a friendly concourse of the vulgar." His place of burial is in the church of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, and there England's noblest poet was committed to the dust, calm in the Christian's sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality.

PARADISE LOST.

First Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS first book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject, man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed; then touches the prime cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of Heaven, with all his crew, into the great deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his Angels now fallen into Hell, described here not in the centre (for Heaven and Earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos: here, Satan, with his angels, lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall, Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise; their numbers, array of battle, their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report, in Heaven; for that angels were, long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal Peers there sit in council.

OF man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal tas'e
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse! that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed

In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of chaos: or if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook, that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou, O Spirit! that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou knowest;—thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And madest it pregnant:—what in me is dark,
Illumine! what is low, raise and support!
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
Say first,—for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell,—say first, what cause
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will,—
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
The infernal serpent: he it was, whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel angels; by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
If he opposed; and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in Heaven, and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,

Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him. Round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdúrate pride and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as angels ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild.
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace, flamed; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe;
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place eternal justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness; and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of heaven,
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.
Oh, how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns; and weltering by his side,
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named
Beëlzebub: to whom the arch enemy,
And thence in heaven called Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:
"If thou beest he—But, oh, how fallen! how changed
"From him, who in the happy realms of light,
"Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
"Myriads, though bright! If he, whom mutual league,
"United thoughts and counsels, equal hope

" And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
" Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
" In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest,
" From what height fallen: so much the stronger proved
" He with his thunder; and till then who knew
" The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
" Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
" Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,—
" Though changed in outward lustre,—that fixed mind
" And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
" That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
" And to the fierce contention brought along
" Innumerable force of spirits armed,
" That durst dislike his reign; and, me preferring,
" His utmost power with adverse power opposed
" In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
" And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
" All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
" And study of revenge, immortal hate,
" And courage never to submit or yield,
" And what is else not to be overcome,—
" That glory never shall his wrath, or might,
" Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
" With suppliant knee, and deify his power,
" Who from the terror of this arm so late
" Doubted his empire,—that were low indeed!
" That were an ignominy and shame beneath
" This downfall! since, by fate, the strength of gods
" And this empyreal substance cannot fail;
" Since, through experience of this great event,
" In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
" We may, with more successful hope, resolve
" To wage, by force or guile, eternal war,
" Irreconcileable to our grand Foe,
" Who now triúmphs, and in the excess of joy
" Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."

So spake the apostate angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair:
And him thus answered soon his bold compeer:

" O Prince! O chief of many thronèd Powers!

" That led the embattled Seraphim to war
" Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
" Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King,
" And put to proof his high supremacy,
" Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate:
" Too well I see and rue the dire event,
" That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
" Hath lost us Heaven; and all this mighty host
" In horrible destruction laid thus low,
" As far as gods and heavenly essences
" Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
" Invincible, and vigour soon returns,
" Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
" Here swallowed up in endless misery.
" But what if he our Conqueror, (whom I now
" Of force believe almighty, since no less
" Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
" Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
" Strongly to suffer and support our pains?
" That we may so suffice his vengeful ire;
" Or do him mightier service, as his thralls
" By right of war, whate'er his business be,
" Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
" Or do his errands in the gloomy deep?
" What can it then avail, though yet we feel
" Strength undiminished, or eternal being,
" To undergo eternal punishment?"

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-fiend replied:

" Fallen Cherub! to be weak is miserable,
" Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,
" To do aught good never will be our task,
" But ever to do ill our sole delight;
" As being the contrary to his high will,
" Whom we resist. If then his providence
" Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
" Our labour must be to pervert that end,
" And out of good still to find means of evil:
" Which oft-times may succeed, so as perhaps
" Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
" His inmost counsels from their destined aim.

" But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
" His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
" Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous hail,
" Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
" The fiery surge, that from the precipice
" Of Heaven received us falling; and the thunder,
" Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
" Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
" To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
" Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn,
" Or satiate fury, yield it from our foe.
" Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
" The seat of desolation, void of light,
" Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
" Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
" From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
" There rest, if any rest can harbour there;
" And, reassembling our afflicted powers,
" Consult how we may henceforth most offend
" Our enemy; our own loss how repair;
" How overcome this dire calamity;
" What reinforcement we may gain from hope;
" If not, what resolution from despair."
Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed: his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood; in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos, or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held; or that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream:
Him, haply, slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixèd anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays.

So stretched out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay
Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence
Had risen or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs;
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others; and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy shown
On man by him seduced; but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
Driven backward, slope their pointing spires, and, rolled
In billows, leave in the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
That felt unusual height; till on dry land
He lights; if it were land, that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire;
And such appeared in hue, as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leaves a singèd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet! Him followed his next mate;
Both glorying to have 'scaped the Stygian flood,
As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal power.
"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
Said then the lost archangel, "this the seat
"That we must change for heaven? this mournful gloom
"For that celestial light? Be it so! since he,
"Who now is Sovereign, can dispose and bid
"What shall be right: furthest from him is best,
"Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme

" Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
" Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
" Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell,
" Receive thy new possessor! one who brings
" A mind not to be changed by place or time.
" The mind is its own place, and in itself
" Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
" What matter where, if I be still the same,
" And what I should be,—all but less than he
" Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
" We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
" Here for his envy; will not drive us hence:
" Here we may reign secure; and in my choice
" To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
" Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven.
" But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
" The associates and copartners of our loss,
" Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,
" And call them not to share with us their part
" In this unhappy mansion; or once more,
" With rallied arms, to try what may be yet
" Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?"
So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub
Thus answered:
" Leader of those armies bright,
" Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have foiled,
" If once they hear that voice,—their liveliest pledge
" Of hope in fear and dangers, heard so oft
" In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
" Of battle when it raged, in all assaults
" Their surest signal,—they will soon resume
" New courage, and revive, though now they lie
" Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
" As we erewhile, astounded and amazed:—
" No wonder, fallen such a pernicious height."
He scarce had ceased, when the superior fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders, like the moon, whose orb

SATAN ON THE BURNING LAKE.

Page 39.

Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening, from the top of Fesolè,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
His spear,—to equal which the tallest pine,
Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast
Of some great amiral, were but a wand,—
He walked with to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marle,—not like those steps
On Heaven's azure: and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and called
His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced,
Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High overarched imbower; or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
Hath vexed the Red Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses
And broken chariot-wheels: so thick bestrewn,
Abjéct and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He called so loud, that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded:

"Princes, Potentates,
"Warriors, the flower of Heaven, once yours, now lost,
"If such astonishment as this can seize
"Eternal spirits;—or have ye chosen this place
"After the toil of battle to repose
"Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
"To slumber here, as in the vales of heaven?—
"Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
"To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
"Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood,
"With scattered arms and ensigns; till anon
"His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern

" The advantage, and, descending, tread us down
" Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts
" Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
" Awake! arise! or be for ever fallen?"
They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
Upon the wing; as when men, wont to watch,
On duty sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
Yet to their general's voice they soon obeyed,
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
Waved round the coast, up called a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharoah hung
Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile:
So numberless were those bad angels seen,
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires:
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain:—
A multitude, like which the populous north
Poured never from her frozen loins, to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the south, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Lybian sands.
Forthwith from every squadron and each band
The heads and leaders thither haste, where stood
Their great commander; godlike shapes, and forms
Excelling human, princely dignities,
And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones;
Though of their names in heavenly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and razed
By their rebellion from the books of Life.
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names; till, wandering o'er the earth
Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,

By falsities and lies the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible
Glory of Him that made them to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
With gay religions, full of pomp and gold;
And devils to adore for deities:
Then were they known to men by various names,
And various idols through the heathen world.
Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,
Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch
At their great emperor's call, as next in worth,
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.
The chief were those, who, from the pit of Hell
Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix
Their seats long after next the seat of God;
Their altars by his altar;—gods adored
Among the nations round;—and durst abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned
Between the Cherubim: yea, often placed
Within his sanctuary itself, their shrines—
Abominations; and with cursed things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
And with their darkness durst affront his light.
First MOLOCH, horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshipped in Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argob, and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led, by fraud, to build
His temple right against the temple of God
On that opprobrious hill; and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom,—Tophet thence
And black Gehenna called,—the type of Hell.

Next CHEMOS the óbscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroër to Nebo, and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonáïm, Seon's realm, beyond
The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,
And Eleälè, to the asphaltic pool:
Peor his other name, when he enticed
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe,
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
Even to that hill of Scandal by the grove
Of Moloch homicide,—lust hard by hate;—
Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they, who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of BAALIM and ASHTAROTH,—those male,
These feminine:—for spirits, when they please,
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure;
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their airy purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfil.
For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads as low
Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes.

With these in troop
Came Astoreth, whom the Phœnicians called
Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king, whose heart, though large,

Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul.
THAMMUZ came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties, all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat;
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah.
Next came one
Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopped off
In his own temple, on the grunsel edge,
Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshippers:
DAGON his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish: yet had his temple high
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath, and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him followed RIMMON, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abana and Pharpar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost, and gained a king,—
Ahaz his sottish conqueror,—whom he drew
God's altar to disparage, and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquished.
After these appeared
A crew, who, under names of old renown,
OSIRIS, ISIS, ORUS, and their train,
With monstrous shapes, and sorceries, abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms

Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape
The infection, when their borrowed gold composed
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
Doubled that sin, in Bethel and in Dan,
Likening his Maker to the grazèd ox;
Jehóvah! who in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd
Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself: to him no temple stood,
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury, and outrage: and when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine:
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron to avoid worse rape.
These were the prime in order and in might:
The rest were long to tell, though far renowned,
The Ionian gods, of Javan's issue;—held
Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth
Their boasted parents: Titan, Heaven's first-born,
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger Saturn: he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So Jove usurping reigned: these first in Crete
And Ida known; thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,
And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost Isles.

All these and more came flocking, but with looks
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their chief
Not in despair—to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue; but he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears:
Then straight commands, that at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
His mighty standard: that proud honour claimed
Azazel as his right, a cherub tall;
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
The imperial ensign, which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor, streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,—
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
At which the universal host up sent
A shout that tore Hell's concave; and, beyond,
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment, through the gloom, were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient colours waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable: anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders; such as raised
To height of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle; and, instead of rage,
Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and 'suage,
With solemn touches, troubled thoughts; and chase
Anguish, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain,
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force, with fixèd thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes, that charmed

Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil: and now
Advanced in view they stand, a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriors old with ordered spear and shield;
Awaiting what command their mighty chief
Had to impose. He through the armed files
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views—their order due—
Their visages and stature as of gods—
Their number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,
Glories; for never, since created man,
Met such embodied force, as named with these
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes; though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes, and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebisond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore,
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabia. Thus far, these, beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their dread commander: he, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a tower: his form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun, new risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams; or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs; darkened so, yet shone
Above them all the archangel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care

Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime,—the followers rather—
(Far other once beheld in bliss!) condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain;
Millions of spirits for his fault amerced
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt; yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory withered! as, when Heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singèd top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he essayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words, interwove with sighs, found out their way.
"O myriads of immortal spirits! O powers
"Matchless, but with the Almighty; and that strife
"Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
"As this place testifies, and this dire change
"Hateful to utter: but what power of mind,
"Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
"Of knowledge past or present, could have feared
"How such united force of gods,—how such
"As stood like these could ever know repulse?
"For who can yet believe, though after loss,
"That all these puissant legions, whose exile
"Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to reascend
"Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
"For me be witness all the host of Heaven,
"If counsels different or dangers shunned
"By me have lost our hopes: but he, who reigns
"Monarch in Heaven, till then as one secure
"Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
"Consent, or custom; and his regal state
"Put forth at full; but still his strength concealed,

" Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
" Henceforth his might we know, and know our own;
" So as not either to provoke, or dread
" New war, provoked: our better part remains,
" To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
" What force effected not; that he no less
" At length from us may find, *who overcomes*
" *By force, hath overcome but half his foe.*
" Space may produce new worlds, whereof so rife
" There went a fame in Heaven, that he ere long
" Intended to create, and therein plant
" A generation, whom his choice regard
" Should favour equal to the sons of Heaven.
" Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
" Our first eruption; thither or elsewhere:
" For this infernal pit shall never hold
" Celestial spirits in bondage, nor the abyss
" Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
" Full counsel must mature: peace is despaired;
" For who can think submission? war then, war,
" Open or understood, must be resolved."
He spake; and, to confirm his words, out flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far around illumined Hell: highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce, with grasped arms,
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.
There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf; undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
A numerous brigade hastened; as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. MAMMON led them on;
MAMMON, the least erected spirit that fell
From Heaven; for e'en in Heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more

The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific: by him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the centre, and, with impious hands,
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures, better hid. Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire
That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those,
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By spirits reprobate; and in an hour,
What in an age, they, with incessant toil,
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude,
With wondrous art, founded the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion dross:
A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells,
By strange conveyance, filled each hollow nook:
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
Anon, out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose, like an exhalation, with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet;
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars, overlaid
With golden architrave: nor did there want
Cornice, or frieze with bossy sculptures graven;
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon,
Nor great Alcairo, such magnificence
Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis, their gods; or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove

In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately height: and straight the doors,
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
And level pavement: from the archèd roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring entered, and the work some praise,
And some the architect: his hand was known
In Heaven by many a towered structure high,
Where sceptred angels held their residence,
And sat as princes; whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard or unadored
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and, with the setting sun,
Dropped from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Æ'gean isle: thus they relate,
Erring; for he, with this rebellious rout,
Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he 'scape
By all his engines; but was headlong sent
With his industrious crew to build in Hell.
  Meanwhile, the wingèd heralds, by command
Of sovereign power, with awful ceremony
And trumpets' sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council, forwith to be held
At Pandemonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers; their summons called
From every band and squarèd regiment
By place or choice the worthiest; they anon,
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended: all access was thronged; the gates

And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall,
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
Defied the best of Panim chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance,)
Thick swarmed, both on the ground, and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring-time, when the sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters: they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
Their state affairs: so thick the airy crowd
Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder! they, but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless, like that Pygmëan race
Beyond the Indian mount; or fairy elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side,
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while, over-head, the moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear:
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
Thus incorporeal spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions like themselves,
The great Seraphic lords, and Cherubim,
In close recess, and secret conclave sat;
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

Second Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created: their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan their chief undertakes alone the voyage, is honoured and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between Hell and Heaven: with what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought.

High on a throne of royal state,—which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus, and of Ind;
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings Barbaric pearl and gold,—
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence: and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high; insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven, and, by success untaught,
His proud imaginations thus displayed:
" Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!
" For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
" Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,
" I give not Heaven for lost. From this descent
" Celestial virtues rising, will appear
" More glorious and more dread than from no fall,

" And trust themselves to fear no second fate.
" Me though just right and the fixed laws of Heaven
" Did first create your leader; next, free choice,
" With what besides, in council or in fight,
" Hath been achieved of merit; yet this loss,
" Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
" Established in a safe unenvied throne,
" Yielded with full consent. The happier state
" In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
" Envy from each inferior; but who here
" Will envy whom the highest place exposes
" Foremost to stand, against the Thunderer's aim
" Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
" Of endless pain? Where there is then no good
" For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
" From faction; for none, sure, will claim in Hell
" Precedence; none, whose portion is so small
" Of present pain, that with ambitious mind
" Will covet more. With this advantage then
" To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
" More than can be in Heaven, we now return
" To claim our just inheritance of old;
" Surer to prosper than prosperity
" Could have assured us; and by what best way,
" Whether of open war or covert guile,
" We now debate: who can advise, may speak."
He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred king,
Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest spirit
That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair:
His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength; and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse,
He reck'd not: and these words thereafter spake:
" My sentence is for open war: of wiles,
" More unexpert, I boast not; them let those
" Contrive who need, or when they need,—not now.
" For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest,
" Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
" The signal to ascend, sit lingering here

" Heaven's fugitives; and for their dwelling-place
" Accept this dark, opprobrious den of shame,
" The prison of his tyranny who reigns
" By our delay? no; let us rather choose,
" Arm'd with Hell-flames and fury, all at once
" O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way,
" Turning our tortures into horrid arms
" Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise
" Of his almighty engine he shall hear
" Infernal thunder; and, for lightning, see
" Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
" Among his angels: and his throne itself
" Mixed with Tartarean sulphur, and strange fire,
" His own invented torments. But perhaps
" The way seems difficult and steep, to scale
" With upright wing against a higher foe.
" Let such bethink them, (if the sleepy drench
" Of that forgetful lake benumb not still),
" That in our proper motion we ascend
" Up to our native seat: descent and fall
" To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
" When the fierce Foe hung on our broken rear
" Insulting, and pursued us through the deep,
" With what compulsion and laborious flight
" We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy then;
" The event is feared: should we again provoke
" Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
" To our destruction; if there be in Hell
" Fear to be worse destroyed: what can be worse
" Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned
" In this abhorred deep to utter woe;
" Where pain of unextinguishable fire
" Must exercise us without hope of end,
" The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
" Inexorable, and the torturing hour
" Calls us to penance? more destroyed than thus,
" We should be quite abolished, and expire.
" What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
" His utmost ire? which, to the height enraged,
" Will either quite consume us, and reduce

" To nothing this essential ;—happier far
" Than miserable to have eternal being !
" Or if our substance be indeed divine,
" And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
" On this side nothing ; and by proof we feel
" Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,
" And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
" Though inaccessible, his fatal throne :
" Which, if not victory, is yet revenge."
He ended frowning, and his look denounced
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous,
To less than gods. On the other side uprose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane :
A fairer person lost not Heaven ; he seemed
For dignity composed and high exploit :
But all was false and hollow ; though his tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest councils ; for his thoughts were low :
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful ; yet he pleased the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began :
" I should be much for open war, O peers !
" As not behind in hate ; if what was urged,
" Main reason to persuade immediate war,
" Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
" Ominous conjecture on the whole success :
" When he who most excels in fact of arms,
" In what he counsels and in what excels
" Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
" And utter dissolution, as the scope
" Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
" First, what revenge ? The towers of Heaven are filled
" With armèd watch, that render all access
" Impregnable : oft on the bordering deep
" Encamp their legions ; or, with óbscure wing,
" Scout far and wide into the realm of night,
" Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
" By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise,
" With blackest insurrection, to confound

" Heaven's purest light; yet our great enemy,
" All incorruptible, would on his throne
" Sit unpolluted; and the ethereal mould,
" Incapable of stain, would soon expel
" Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
" Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
" Is flat despair: we must exasperate
" The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage,
" And that must end us;—that must be our cure,
" To be no more: sad cure! for who would lose,
" Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
" Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
" To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
" In the wide womb of uncreated night,
" Devoid of sense and motion? and who knows,—
" Let this be good,—whether our angry Foe
" Can give it, or will ever? how he can,
" Is doubtful; that he never will, is sure.
" Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
" Belike through impotence, or unaware,
" To give his enemies their wish, and end
" Them in his anger, whom his anger saves
" To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we then?'
" Say they who counsel war: 'we are decreed,
" Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
" Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
" What can we suffer worse?' Is this then worst,
" Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
" What! when we fled amain, pursued and struck
" With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
" The deep to shelter us? this Hell then seemed
" A refuge from those wounds: or when we lay
" Chained on the burning lake? That, sure, was worse.
" What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,
" Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
" And plunge us in the flames? or, from above,
" Should intermitted vengeance arm again
" His red right hand to plague us? What, if all
" Her stores were opened, and this firmament
" Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,

" Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall
" One day upon our heads? while we, perhaps,
" Designing or exhorting glorious war,
" Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled
" Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
" Of wracking whirlwinds; or for ever sunk
" Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains;
" There to converse with everlasting groans,
" Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
" Ages of hopeless end! This would be worse.
" War therefore, open or concealed, alike
" My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
" With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
" Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's height
" All these our motions vain sees, and derides;
" Not more almighty to resist our might,
" Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
" Shall we then live thus vile, the race of Heaven,
" Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
" Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
" By my advice; since fate inevitable
" Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
" The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
" Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust
" That so ordains: this was at first resolved,
" If we were wise, against so great a foe
" Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
" I laugh, when those, who at the spear are bold
" And venturous, if that fail them, shrink and fear,
" What yet they know must follow, to endure
" Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
" The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
" Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
" Our súpreme foe, in time, may much remit
" His ánger; and perhaps, thus far removed,
" Not mind us not offending, satisfied
" With what is punished; whence these raging fires
" Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
" Our purer essence then will overcome
" Their noxious vapour; or, inured, not feel;

" Or changed at length, and to the place conformed
" In temper and in nature, will receive
" Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain;
" This horror will grow mild, this darkness, light;
" Besides what hope the never-ending flight
" Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
" Worth waiting; since our present lot appears
" For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
" If we procure not to ourselves more woe."
Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,
Counselled ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth—
Not peace: and after him thus Mammon spake:
" Either to disenthrone the King of Heaven
" We war, if war be best, or to regain
" Our own right lost: him to unthrone we then
" May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
" To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife:
" The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
" The latter: for what place can be for us
" Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord supreme
" We overpower? Suppose he should relent,
" And publish grace to all, on promise made
" Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
" Stand in his presence humble, and receive
" Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
" With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
" Forced halleluiahs; while he lordly sits
" Our envied Sovereign, and his altar breathes
" Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,
" Our servile offerings? This must be our task
" In Heaven,—this our delight! how wearisome
" Eternity so spent in worship paid
" To whom we hate! Let us then not pursue,
" By force impossible, by leave obtained
" Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
" Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek
" Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
" Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
" Free, and to none accountable; preferring
" Hard liberty before the easy yoke

" Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
" Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,
" Useful of hurtful, prosperous of advérse,
" We can create; and in what place soe'er
" Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain,
" Through labour and endurance. This deep world
" Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
" Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire
" Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
" And with the majesty of darkness round
" Covers his throne; from whence deep thunders roar
" Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell?
" As he our darkness, cannot we his light
" Imitate when we please? This desert soil
" Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
" Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise
" Magnificence: and what can Heaven show more?
" Our torments also may, in length of time,
" Become our elements; these piercing fires,
" As soft as now severe; our temper changed
" Into their temper; which must needs remove
" The sensible of pain. All things invite
" To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
" Of order, how in safety best we may
" Compose our present evils, with regard
" Of what we are, and where, dismissing quite
" All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."

He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled
The assembly, as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Sea-faring men o'erwatched, whose bark, by chance,
Or pinnace anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest: such applause was heard
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace; for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell: so much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël
Wrought still within them; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise

By policy and long procéss of time,
In emulation opposite to Heaven.
Which when Beëlzebub perceived, than whom,
Satan except, none higher sat, with grave
Aspéct he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state: deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic though in ruin: sage he stood,
With Atlantéan shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies: his look
Drew audience and attention still as night,
Or summer's noon-tide air, while thus he spake:
"Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring of Heaven,
"Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now
"Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called
"Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote
"Inclines, here to continue, and build up here
"A growing empire. Doubtless! while we dream,
"And know not that the King of Heaven hath doomed
"This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
"Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
"From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league
"Banded against his throne, but to remain
"In strictest bondage, though thus far removed
"Under the inevitable curb, reserved
"His captive multitude: for he, be sure,
"In height or depth, still first and last will reign
"Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
"By our revolt; but over Hell extend
"His empire, and with iron sceptre rule
"Us here, as, with his golden, those in Heaven.
"What! sit we then projecting peace and war?
"War hath determined us, and foiled with loss
"Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
"Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be given
"To us enslaved, but custody severe,
"And stripes, and arbitrary punishment
"Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
"But, to our power, hostility and hate,

" Untamed reluctance, and revenge,—though slow,
" Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
" May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
" In doing what we most in suffering feel?
" Nor will occasion want; nor shall we need
" With dangerous expedition to invade
" Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault, or siege,
" Or ambush from the deep. What if we find
" Some easier enterprise? There is a place,
" (If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven
" Err not,) another world, the happy seat
" Of some new race called Man, about this time
" To be created like to us, though less
" In power and excellence, but favoured more
" Of Him who rules above; so was his will
" Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath,
" That shook Heaven's whole circumference, confirmed.
" Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
" What creatures there inhabit; of what mould,
" Or substance; how endued, and what their power,
" And where their weakness; how attempted best,
" By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,
" And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
" In his own strength, this place my lie exposed,
" The utmost border of his kingdom, left
" To their defence who hold it: here perhaps
" Some advantageous act may be achieved,
" By sudden onset; either with Hell fire
" To waste his whole creation, or possess
" All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
" The puny inhabitants; or if not drive,
" Seduce them to our party, that their God
" May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
" Abolish his own work. This would surpass
" Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
" In our confusion; and our joy upraise
" In his disturbance; when his darling sons,
" Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse
" Their frail original, and faded bliss,—
" Faded so soon! Advise, if this be worth

" Attempting; or to sit in darkness here,
" Hatching vain empires."

Thus Beëlzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel, first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence,
But from the author of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and earth with Hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those infernal states, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:
" Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,
" Synod of gods! and, like to what ye are,
" Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep
" Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
" Nearer our ancient seat; perhaps in view
" Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring arms,
" And opportune excursion, we may chance
" Re-enter Heaven; or else, in some mild zone
" Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light,
" Secure; and at the brightening orient beam
" Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air,
" To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
" Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we send
" In search of this new world? whom shall we find
" Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet
" The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyss,
" And through the palpable obscure find out
" His uncouth way? or spread his airy flight,
" Upborne with indefatigable wings,
Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy isle? What strength, what art, can then
' Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
' Through the strict senteries, and stations thick
" Of angels watching round? Here he had need
" All circumspection; and we now no less
" Choice in our suffrage; for, on whom we send,

" The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."
This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt: but all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
In other's countenance read his own dismay,
Astonished: none, among the choice and prime
Of those Heaven-warring champions, could be found
So hardy as to proffer, or accept
Alone, the dreadful voyage: till at last,
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride,
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:
" O progeny of Heaven, empyreal Thrones!
" With reason hath deep silence and demur
" Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way,
" And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light;
" Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
" Outrageous to devour, immures us round
" Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
" Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
" These passed, (if any pass,) the void profound
" Of unessential Night receives him next,
" Wide gaping, and with utter loss of being
" Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
" If thence he 'scape, into whatever world,
" Or unknown region; what remains him less
" Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
" But I should ill become this throne, O peers!
" And this imperial sovereignty, adorned
" With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed
" And judged of public moment, in the shape
" Of difficulty or danger, could deter
" Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
" These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
" Refusing to accept as great a share
" Of hazard as of honour, due alike
" To him who reigns,—and so much to him due
" Of hazard more, as he above the rest

" High honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty powers,
" Terror of Heaven, though fallen! intend at home,
" While here shall be our home, what best may ease
" The present misery, and render Hell
" More tolerable; if there be cure, or charm,
" To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
" Of this ill mansion. Intermit no watch
" Against a wakeful foe; while I, abroad
" Through all the coasts of dark destruction, seek
" Deliverance for us all: this enterprise
" None shall partake with me."
Thus saying, rose
The monarch, and prevented all reply;
Prudent, lest, from his resolution raised,
Others among the chief might offer now
(Certain to be refused) what erst they feared;
And, so refused, might in opinion stand
His rivals; winning cheap the high repute,
Which he, through hazard huge, must earn. But they
Dreaded not more the adventure, than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose:
Their rising, all at once, was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone; and as a god
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven.
Nor failed they to express how much they praised,
That for the general safety he despised
His own: for neither do the spirits damned
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.
Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief:
As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face; the lowering element
Scowls o'er the darkened landskip snow, or shower:
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds

Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men! devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds: men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace; and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife,
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy;
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That, day and night, for his destruction wait.
The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth,
In order, came the grand infernal peers:
Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seemed
Alone the antagonist of Heaven, nor less
Than Hell's dread emperor, with pomp supreme,
And god-like imitated state: him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim enclosed,
With bright emblazonry, and horrent arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpets' regal sound the great result:
Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By herald's voice explained; the hollow abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell,
With deafening shout, returned them loud acclaim.

Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
By false presumptuous hope, the ranged powers
Disband, and, wandering, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination, or sad choice,
Leads him; perplexed where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great chief return.
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing, or in swift race, contend,
As at the Olympian games, or Pythian fields:
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form.
As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush

To battle in the clouds; before each van
Prick forth the airy knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of Heaven the welkin burns.
Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind: Hell scarce holds the wild uproar.
As when Alcides, from Œchalia crowned
With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore,
Through pain, up by the roots Thessalian pines.
And Lichas from the top of Œta threw
Into the Euboïc sea. Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical, to many a harp,
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battle; and complain that fate
Free virtue should enthral to force or chance.
Their song was partial; but the harmony
(What could it less when spirits immortal sing!)
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
(For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense,)
Others apart sat, on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate—
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute;
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame;
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for a while, or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope; or arm the obdurèd breast
With stubborn patience, as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world,—if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation,—bend
Four ways their flying march, along the banks

Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams:
Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron, of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegethon,
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth; whereof who drinks,
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,—
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile: all else deep snow and ice;
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
Betwixt Damiata and mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air
Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire.
Thither by harpy-footed furies haled,
At certain revolutions, all the damned
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes—extremes by change more fierce
From beds of raging fire, to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth; and there to pine
Immovable, infixed and frozen round,
Periods of time; thence hurried back to fire.
They ferry over this Lethéan sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,—
All in one moment, and so near the brink!
But Fate withstands, and to oppose the attempt
Medusa, with Gorgonian terror, guards
The ford; and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on

In cónfused march forlorn, the adventurous bands,
With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,
Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous—
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp—
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death—
A universe of death! which God by curse
Created evil—for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.
Meanwhile, the adversary of God and man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scours the right-hand coast, sometimes the left:
Now shaves with level wing the deep; then soars
Up to the fiery concave, towering high.
As when, far off at sea, a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs: they on the trading flood
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Ply, stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed
Far off the flying fiend. At last appear
Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof;
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable shape;
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair;
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast, a serpent armed
With mortal sting; about her middle round
A cry of Hell-hounds never ceasing barked

With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,
If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there; yet there still barked and howled
Within, unseen. Far less abhorred than these
Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore:
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon
Eclipses at their charms. The other shape,—
If shape it might be called, that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either; black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart; what seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand: and from his seat
The monster moving onward came as fast,
With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.
The undaunted fiend what this might be admired;—
Admired,—not feared: God and his Son except,
Created thing nought valued he, nor shunned;
And, with disdainful look, thus first began:
"Whence and what art thou, execrable shape!
"That darest, though grim and terrible, advance
"Thy miscreated front athwart my way
"To yonder gates? through them I mean to pass,
"That be assured, without leave asked of thee:
"Retire, or taste thy folly; and learn by proof,
"Hell-born! not to contend with spirits of Heaven."
To whom the goblin full of wrath replied:
"Art thou that traitor angel, art thou he,
"Who first broke peace in Heaven, and faith, till then
"Unbroken; and, in proud, rebellious arms,
"Drew after him the third part of Heaven's sons
"Conjured against the Highest; for which both thou
"And they, outcast from God, are here condemned

" To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
" And reckon'st thou thyself with spirits of Heaven,
" Hell-doomed! and breath'st defiance here and scorn,
" Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
" Thy king and lord! Back to thy punishment,
" False fugitive! and to thy speed add wings;
" Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
" Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
" Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."
So spake the grisly terror; and in shape,
So speaking, and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform: on the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified; and like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend; and such a frown
Each cast at the other, as when two black clouds,
With Heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian; then stand front to front,
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid air:
So frowned the mighty combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe: and now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky sorceress, that sat
Fast by Hell-gate, and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.
" O father! what intends thy hand," she cried,
" Against thy only son? What fury, O son!
" Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
" Against thy father's head? and know'st for whom;
" For him who sits above, and laughs the while
" At thee, ordained his drudge, to execute
" Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids;
" His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both."

She spake, and at her words the hellish pest
Forbore; then these to her Satan returned:
"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
"Thou interposest, that my sudden hand
"Prevented spares to tell thee yet by deeds
"What it intends; till first I know of thee,
"What thing thou art, thus double-formed; and why,
"In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st
"Me father, and that phantasm call'st my son:
"I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
"Sight more detestable than him and thee."
To whom thus the portress of Hell-gate replied:
"Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem
"Now in thine eye so foul? once deemed so fair
"In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
"Of all the Seraphim with thee combined
"In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,
"All on a sudden miserable pain
"Surprised thee; dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
"In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
"Threw forth; till on the left side opening wide,
"Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
"Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
"Out of thy head I sprung: amazement seized
"All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled afraid
"At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign
"Portentous held me: but, familiar grown,
"I pleased, and with attractive graces won
"The most averse; thee chiefly, who, full oft,
"Thyself in me, thy perfect image, viewing
"Becamest enamoured; and such joy thou took'st
"With me in secret, that my womb conceived
"A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
"And fields were fought in Heaven; wherein remained
"(For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
"Clear victory; to our part loss and rout
"Through all the empyréan: down they fell,
"Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven,—down
"Into this deep; and, in the general fall,
"I also: at which time this powerful key

" Into my hand was given, with charge to keep
" These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
" Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
" Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,
" Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
" Prodigious motion felt, and rueful throes.
" At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
" Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
" Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
" Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
" Transformed: but he, my inbred enemy,
" Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart
" Made to destroy: I fled, and cried out, 'DEATH!'
" Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
" From all her caves, and back resounded—'DEATH!'
" I fled; but he pursued, (though more, it seems,
" Inflamed with lust than rage,) and, swifter far,
" Me overtook—his mother—all dismayed;
" And, in embraces forcible and foul
" Engendering with me, of that rape begot
" These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
" Surround me, as thou saw'st; hourly conceived,
" And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
" To me: for, when they list, into the womb
" That bred them they return, and howl and gnaw
" My bowels, their repast; then, bursting forth
" Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,
" That rest or intermission none I find.
" Before mine eyes, in opposition, sits
" Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on;
" And me, his parent, would full soon devour
" For want of other prey, but that he knows
" His end with mine involved; and knows that I
" Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
" Whenever that shall be; so Fate pronounced.
" But thou, O father! I forewarn thee, shun
" His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
" To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
" Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,
" Save he who reigns above, none can resist."

She finished, and the subtle fiend his lore
Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth:
"Dear daughter! since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
"And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge
"Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys
"Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
"Befallen us, unforeseen, unthought of; know
"I come no enemy, but to set free,
"From out this dark and dismal house of pain,
"Both him and thee, and all the heavenly host
"Of spirits, that, in our just pretences armed,
"Fell with us from on high: from them I go
"This uncouth errand sole; and, one for all,
"Myself expose, with lonely steps, to tread
"The unfounded deep, and through the void immense,
"To search with wandering quest a place foretold
"Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now
"Created, vast and round; a place of bliss
"In the purlieus of Heaven, and therein placed
"A race of upstart creatures, to supply
"Perhaps our vacant room; though more removed,
"Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
"Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
"Than this more secret, now designed, I haste
"To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,
"And bring ye to the place where thou and Death
"Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
"Wing silently the buxom air, embalmed
"With odours: there ye shall be fed and filled
"Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey."
He ceased; for both seemed highly pleased, and Death
Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw
Destined to that good hour: no less rejoiced
His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire:
"The key of this infernal pit by due,
"And by command of Heaven's all-powerful King,
"I keep, by him forbidden to unlock
"These adamantine gates; against all force
"Death ready stands to interpose his dart,

" Fearless to be o'ermatched by living might.
" But what owe I to his commands above,
" Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
" Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
" To sit, in hateful office here confined,
" Inhabitant of Heaven and heavenly born;
" Here, in perpetual agony and pain,
" With terrors and with clamours compassed round
" Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
" Thou art my Father, thou my author, thou
" My being gavest me; whom should I obey
" But thee?—whom follow? thou wilt bring me soon
" To that new world of light and bliss, among
" The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
" At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
" Thy daughter and thy darling, without end."
Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge portcullis high up drew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian powers
Could once have moved; then in the keyhole turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron, or solid rock, with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She opened; but to shut
Excelled her power: the gates wide open stood,
That with extended wings a bannered host,
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through,
With horse and chariots ranked in loose array;
So wide they stood, and, like a furnace mouth,
Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.
Before their eyes, in sudden view, appear
The secrets of the hoary deep; a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension; where length, breadth, and height,
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night

And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand:
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms; they around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, (unnumbered as the sands
Of Barca, or Cyrenè's torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds,) and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere,
He rulés a moment: Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray,
By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,
Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss,
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,—
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these, in their pregnant causes, mixed
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds;—
Into this wild abyss the wary fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell, and looked a while,
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed
With noises loud and ruinous, (to compare
Great things with small,) than when Bellona storms,
With all her battering engines bent to rase
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of Heaven were falling, and these elements,
In mutiny, had from her axle torn
The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans
He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke
Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacuity: all unawares,
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drops
Ten thousand fathom deep; and to this hour

Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft: that fury stayed,
Quenched in a boggy syrtis,—neither sea,
Nor good dry land—nigh foundered on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying; behoves him now both oar and sail.
As when a gryphon, through the wilderness
With wingèd course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspian, who, by stealth,
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold; so eagerly the fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way;
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
  At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence: thither he plies,
Undaunted, to meet there whatever power
Or spirit of the nethermost abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies,
Bordering on light; when, straight, behold the throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful deep: with him enthroned
Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon; Rumour next, and Chance,
And Tumult and Confusion all embroiled;
And Discord, with a thousand various mouths.
  To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: "Ye Powers,
" And Spirits of this nethermost abyss,
" Chaos and ancient Night! I come no spy,
" With purpose to explore, or to disturb
" The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint
" Wandering this darksome desert,—as my way
" Lies through your spacious empire up to light,—
" Alone, and without guide, half lost, I seek

"What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
"Confine with Heaven; or if some other place,
"From your dominion won, the ethereal King
"Possesses lately, thither to arrive
"I travel this profound: direct my course;
"Directed, no mean recompense it brings
"To your behoof, if I that region lost,
"All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
"To her original darkness and your sway,
"Which is my present journey, and once more
"Erect the standard there of ancient Night:
"Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge!"
Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
With faltering speech, and visage incomposed,
Answered: "I know thee, stranger, who thou art;—
"That mighty leading angel, who of late
"Made head against Heaven's King, though overthrown.
"I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
"Fled not in silence through the frighted deep,
"With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
"Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-gates
"Poured out by millions her victorious bands
"Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
"Keep residence; if all I can will serve
"That little which is left so to defend,
"Encroached on still through your intestine broils
"Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first Hell,
"Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
"Now lately Heaven and Earth, another World,
"Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain—
"To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell.
"If that way be your walk, you have not far;
"So much the nearer danger: go, and speed!
"Havoc and spoil and ruin are my gain."
He ceased; and Satan stayed not to reply;
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity, and force renewed,
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse; and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environed, wins his way; harder beset,

And more endangered, than when Argo passed
Through Bosphorus betwixt the justling rocks:
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool steered.
So he with difficulty and labour hard
Moved on, with difficulty and labour he;
But he once past, soon after, when man fell,—
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain
Following his track, (such was the will of Heaven,)
Paved after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,
From Hell continued, reaching the utmost orb
Of this frail world; by which the spirits perverse,
With easy intercourse, pass to and fro
To tempt and punish mortals, except whom
God and good angels guard by special grace.
But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn: here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire
As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
With tumult less, and with less hostile din;
That Satan, with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
In circuit,—undetermined square or round,—
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living sapphire, once his native seat!
And fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendant World, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed, and in a cursèd hour, he hies.

Third Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

God, sitting on his throne, sees Satan flying towards this world, then newly created; shows him to the Son, who sat at his right hand; foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind; clears his own justice and wisdom from all imputation, having created man free, and able enough to have withstood his tempter; yet declares his purpose of grace towards him, in regard he fell not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The Son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards man; but God again declares, that grace cannot be extended towards man without the satisfaction of divine justice; man hath offended the majesty of God by aspiring to Godhead, and therefore, with all his progeny, devoted to death, must die, unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his offence, and undergo his punishment. The Son of God freely offers himself a ransom for man: the Father accepts him, ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in heaven and earth; commands all the angels to adore him. They obey, and, hymning to their harps in full quire, celebrate the Father and the Son. Meanwhile Satan alights upon the bare convex of this world's outermost orb; where, wandering, he first finds a place, since called the Limbo of Vanity; what persons and things fly up thither: thence comes to the gate of Heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it: his passage thence to the orb of the Sun; he finds there Uriel, the regent of that orb; but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner angel; and, pretending a zealous desire to behold the new creation, and man whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed; alights first on Mount Niphates.

Hail, holy Light! offspring of Heaven first-born!
Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,
And never but in unapproachèd light
Dwelt from eternity; dwelt then in thee,

Bright effluence of bright essence increate!
Or hear'st thou rather pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the Sun,
Before the Heavens thou wert; and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless infinite.
Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian pool, though long detained
In that obscure sojourn; while, in my flight,
Through utter and through middle darkness borne,
With other notes than to the Orphéan lyre,
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night;
Taught by the heavenly Muse to venture down
The dark descent, and up to reascend,
Though hard and rare: thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop-serene hath quenched their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion! and the flowery brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
Those other two equalled with me in fate,
So were I equalled with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris, and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias, and Phineus, prophets old:
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark

Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off! and, for the book of knowledge fair,
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out!
So much the rather thou, celestial Light!
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse; that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Now had the Almighty Father from above,
From the pure empyréan where he sits
High throned above all height, bent down his eye,
His own works, and their works, at once to view.
About him all the Sanctities of Heaven
Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
Beatitude past utterance; on his right
The radiant image of his glory sat,
His only Son. On earth he first beheld
Our two first parents, yet the only two
Of mankind, in the happy garden placed,
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love—
Uninterrupted joy, unrivalled love—
In blissful solitude. He then surveyed
Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there
Coasting the wall of Heaven on this side night
In the dun air sublime; and ready now
To stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet,
On the bare outside of this World, that seemed
Firm land imbosomed without firmament,
Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.
Him God beholding from his prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,
Thus to his only Son, foreseeing, spake:—

"Only begotten Son! seest thou what rage
"Transports our adversary? whom no bounds
"Prescribed, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains
"Heaped on him there, nor yet the main abyss
"Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems
"On desperate revenge, that shall redound

" Upon his own rebellious head. And now,
" Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way
" Not far off Heaven, in the precints of light,
" Directly towards the new-created world,
" And man there placed; with purpose to assay
" If him by force he can destroy, or, worse,
" By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert:
" For man will hearken to his glozing lies,
" And easily transgress the sole command,
" Sole pledge of his obedience; so will fall,
" He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?
" Whose but his own? Ingrate! he had of me
" All he could have: I made him just and right,
" Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
" Such I created all the ethereal Powers
" And spirits, both them who stood, and them who failed:
" Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
" Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
" Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,
" Where only what they needs must do appeared,
" Not what they would? what praise could they receive?
" What pleasure I from such obedience paid;
" When will and reason, (reason also is choice,)
" Useless and vain,—of freedom both despoiled,
" Made passive both,—had served necessity,
" Not me? They therefore, as to right belonged,
" So were created; nor can justly accuse
" Their Maker, or their making, or their fate;
" As if predestination over-ruled
" Their will, disposed by absolute decree
" Or high foreknowledge. They themselves decreed
" Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
" Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
" Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
" So, without least impulse, or shadow of fate,
" Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
" They trespass, authors to themselves in all,
" Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
" I formed them free, and free they must remain,
" Till they enthral themselves: I else must change

" Their nature, and revoke their high decree,
" Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
" Their freedom: they themselves ordained their fall.
" The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
" Self-tempted, self-depraved: man falls, deceived
" By the other first: man therefore shall find grace,
" The other none: in mercy and justice both,
" Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel;
" But mercy first and last shall brightest shine."
Thus while God spake, ambrosial fragrance filled
All Heaven, and in the blessed spirits elect
Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.
Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious: in him all his Father shone
Substantially expressed; and in his face
Divine compassion visibly appeared,
Love without end, and without measure grace;
Which uttering, thus he to his Father spake:
" O Father! gracious was that word which closed
" Thy sovran sentence, that man should find grace;
" For which both Heaven and Earth shall high extol
" Thy praises, with the innumerable sound
" Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
" Encompassed shall resound thee ever blest.
" For should man finally be lost? should man,
" Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
" Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
" With his own folly? that be from thee far!
" That far be from thee, Father! who art judge
" Of all things made, and judgest only right.
" Or shall the adversary thus obtain
" His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfil
" His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught;
" Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,
" Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell
" Draw after him the whole race of mankind;
" By him corrupted? Or wilt thou thyself
" Abolish thy creation, and unmake
" For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?
" So should thy goodness and thy greatness both

" Be questioned, and blasphemed, without defence."
To whom the great Creator thus replied:
" O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
" Son of my bosom, Son, who art alone
" My word, my wisdom, and effectual might!
" All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
" As my eternal purpose hath decreed.
" Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will;
" Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
" Freely vouchsafed: once more I will renew
" His lapsèd powers, though forfeit and enthralled
" By sin to foul, exorbitant desires:
" Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
" On even ground against his mortal foe;
" By me upheld, that he may know how frail
" His fallen condition is, and to me owe
" All his deliverance, and to none but me.
" Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
" Elect above the rest; so is my will:
" The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warned
" Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
" The incensèd Deity, while offered grace
" Invites: for I will clear their senses dark,
" What may suffice; and soften stony hearts
" To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
" To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
" Though but endeavoured with sincere intent,
" Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.
" And I will place within them, as a guide,
" My umpire, Conscience; whom if they will hear,
" Light after light, well used, they shall attain,
" And, to the end persisting, safe arrive.
" This, my long sufferance and my day of grace
" They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;
" But hard be hardened, blind be blinded more,
" That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;
" And none but such from mercy I exclude.
" But yet all is not done: man disobeying,
" Disloyal, breaks his feälty, and sins
" Against the high supremacy of Heaven,

" Affecting Godhead, and so losing all,
" To expiate his treason hath nought left;
" But, to destruction sacred and devote,
" He, with his whole posterity, must die:
" Die he or justice must; unless for him
" Some other able, and as willing, pay
" The rigid satisfaction—death for death.
" Say, heavenly Powers! where shall we find such love?
" Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem
" Man's mortal crime; and just, the unjust to save?
" Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?"
He asked, but all the heavenly quire stood mute,
And silence was in Heaven: on man's behalf
Patron or intercessor none appeared;
Much less, that durst upon his own head draw
The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.
And now, without redemption, all mankind
Must have been lost, adjudged to Death and Hell
By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,
His dearest mediation thus renewed:
" Father! thy word is past; man shall find grace;
" And shall grace not find means?—that finds her way
" The speediest of thy winged messengers
" To visit all thy creatures, and to all
" Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought;
" Happy for man, so coming! he her aid
" Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost;
" Atonement for himself, or offering meet,
" Indebted and undone, hath none to bring.
" Behold me, then; me for him, life for life,
" I offer; on me let thine anger fall:
" Account me man; I for his sake will leave
" Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
" Freely put off, and for him lastly die
" Well pleased: on me let Death wreak all his rage;
" Under his gloomy power I shall not long
" Lie vanquished: thou hast given me to possess
" Life in myself for ever; by thee I live,
" Though now to death I yield, and am his due,

" All that of me can die: yet, that debt paid,
" Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave
" His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul
" For ever with corruption there to dwell;
" But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
" My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil;
" Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop,
" Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed.
" I, through the ample air, in triumph high
" Shall lead Hell captive, maugre Hell, and show
" The powers of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
" Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,
" While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes—
" Death last, and with his carcass glut the grave:
" Then, with the multitude of my redeemed,
" Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,
" Father! to see thy face, wherein no cloud
" Of anger shall remain, but peace assured
" And reconcilement: wrath shall be no more
" Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire."
His words here ended, but his meek aspéct
Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
To mortal men; above which only shone
Filial obedience: as a sacrifice
Glad to be offered, he attends the will
Of his great Father. Admiration seized
All Heaven, what this might mean, and whither tend
Wondering; but soon the Almighty thus replied:
" O thou, in Heaven and earth the only peace
" Found out for mankind under wrath! O thou,
" My sole complacence! well thou knowest how dear
" To me are all my works; nor man the least,
" Though last created; that for him I spare
" Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,
" By losing thee a while, the whole race lost.
" Thou therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,
" Their nature also to thy nature join;
" And be thyself man among men on earth,
" Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,
" By wondrous birth: be thou, in Adam's room,

" The head of all mankind, though Adam's son.
" As in him perish all men, so in thee,
" As from a second root, shall be restored,
" As many as are restored: without thee none.
" His crime makes guilty all his sons: thy merit,
" Imputed, shall absolve them, who renounce
" Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
" And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
" Receive new life. So man, as is most just,
" Shall satisfy for man, be judged and die;
" And dying rise, and rising with him raise
" His brethren, ransomed with his own dear life.
" So heavenly love shall outdo hellish hate,
" Giving to death, and dying to redeem—
" So dearly to redeem what hellish hate
" So easily destroyed; and still destroys
" In those who, when they may, accept not grace.
" Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume
" Man's nature, lessen or degrade thine own.
" Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss
" Equal to God, and equally enjoying
" God-like fruition, quitted all, to save
" A world from utter loss; and hast been found,
" By merit more than birthright—Son of God,
" Found worthiest to be so by being good,
" Far more than great or high;—because in thee
" Love hath abounded more than glory abounds;
" Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt
" With thee thy manhood also to this throne;
" Here shalt thou sit incarnate—here shalt reign
" Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
" Anointed universal King: all power
" I give thee: reign for ever, and assume
" Thy merits: under thee, as head supreme,
" Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions, I reduce;
" All knees to thee shall bow, of them that bide
" In Heaven, or Earth, or under Earth in Hell.
" When thou, attended gloriously from Heaven,
" Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send
" The summoning Archangels to proclaim

" Thy dread tribunal; forthwith, from all winds,
" The living, and forthwith the cited dead
" Of all past ages, to the general doom
" Shall hasten; such a peal shall rouse their sleep!
" Then, all thy saints assembled, thou shalt judge
" Bad men and angels: they arraigned shall sink
" Beneath thy sentence: Hell, her numbers full,
" Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Meanwhile
" The world shall burn; and from her ashes spring
" New Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell;
" And, after all their tribulations long,
" See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
" With joy and love triumphing, and fair truth:
" Then thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by,
" For regal sceptre then no more shall need:
" God shall be all in all. But, all ye gods,
" Adore him who, to compass all this, dies;—
" Adore the Son, and honour him as me."
No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all
The multitude of angels, with a shout
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
The eternal regions. Lowly reverent
Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground,
With solemn adoration, down they cast
Their crowns inwove with amarant and gold—
Immortal amarant, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the tree of life,
Began to bloom; but soon for man's offence
To Heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,
And flowers aloft, shading the fount of life,
And where the river of bliss, through midst of Heaven,
Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream:
With these, that never fade, the spirits elect
Bind their resplendent locks inwreathed with beams;
Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.
Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took—

Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung; and, with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony, they introduce
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high:
No voice exempt—no voice but well could join
Melodious part; such concord is in Heaven.
Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent—
Immutable—Immortal—Infinite—
Eternal King! Thee, Author of all being,
Fountain of light, thyself invisible
Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st
Throned inaccessible, but when thou shadest
The full blaze of thy beams, and, through a cloud
Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine,
Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear;
Yet dazzle Heaven, that brightest Seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.
Thee next they sang of all creation first—
Begotten Son, Divine Similitude!
In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud
Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,
Whom else no creature can behold: on thee
Impressed the effulgence of his glory abides;
Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests.
He Heaven of Heavens, and all the Powers therein,
By thee created, and by thee threw down
The aspiring Dominations: thou that day
Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare,
Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook
Heaven's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks
Thou drovest of warring angels disarrayed.
Back from pursuit thy Powers with loud acclaim
Thee only extolled, Son of thy Father's might,
To execute fierce vengeance on his foes;
Not so on man: him, through their malice fallen,
Father of mercy and grace! thou did'st not doom
So strictly, but much more to pity incline.
No sooner did thy dear and only Son
Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail man
So strictly, but much more to pity inclined;

He, to appease thy wrath, and end the strife
Of mercy and justice in thy face discerned,
Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
Second to thee, offered himself to die
For man's offence. O unexampled love,
Love nowhere to be found, less than Divine!
Hail, Son of God, Saviour of men! Thy name
Shall be the copious matter of my song
Henceforth; and never shall my harp thy praise
Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.
Thus they in Heaven, above the stary sphere,
Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
Meanwhile upon the firm opacous globe
Of this round world, whose first convex divides
The luminous inferior orbs, inclosed
From Chaos and the inroad of Darkness old,
Satan alighted walks. A globe far off
It seemed; now seems a boundless continent,
Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night
Starless exposed, and ever-threatening storms
Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky;
Save on that side which, from the wall of Heaven,
Though distant far, some small reflection gains
Of glimmering air, less vexed with tempest loud:
Here walk the fiend at large in spacious field.
As when a vulture on Imaüs bred,
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
Dislodging from a region scarce of prey,
To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids
On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs
Of Ganges, or Hydaspes, Indian streams;
But in his way lights on the barren plains
Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
With sails and wind their cany waggons light:
So, on this windy sea of land, the fiend
Walked up and down alone, bent on his prey;
Alone, for other creature in this place,
Living or lifeless, to be found was none—
None yet; but store hereafter from the Earth
Up hither, like aërial vapours, flew

Of all things transitory and vain, when sin
With vanity had filled the works of men:
Both all things vain, and all who in vain things
Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame,
Or happiness in this or the other life;
All who have their reward on Earth, the fruits
Of painful superstition, and blind zeal,
Nought seeking but the praise of men, here find
Fit retribution, empty as their deeds;
All the unaccomplished work of Nature's hand,
Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixed,
Dissolved on earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
Till final dissolution, wander here:
(Not in the neighbouring moon, as some have dreamed;
Those argent fields more likely habitants,
Translated saints, or middle spirits, hold
Betwixt the angelical and human kind:)
Hither, of ill-joined sons and daughters born,
First from the ancient world those giants came
With many a vain exploit, though then renowned:
The builders next of Babel on the plain
Of Sennaär, and still with vain design
New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build:
Others came single; he who, to be deemed
A god, leaped fondly into Ætna flames,
Empedocles; and he who, to enjoy
Plato's Elysium, leaped into the sea,
Cleombrotus; and many more too long,
Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars,
White, black, and gray, with all their trumpery.
Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so far to seek
In Golgotha him dead, who lives in Heaven;
And they who, to be sure of Paradise,
Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised;
They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talked, and that first moved:
And now St. Peter at Heaven's wicket seems
To wait them with his keys, and now at foot

Of Heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo!
A violent cross wind from either coast
Blows them transverse, ten thousand leagues away,
Into the devious air: then might ye see
Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers tost
And fluttered into rags; then relics, beads,
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
The sport of winds: all these, upwhirled aloft,
Fly o'er the backside of the world far off,
Into a Limbo large and broad, since called
The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown
Long after, now unpeopled, and untrod.
All this dark globe the fiend found as he passed;
And long he wandered, till at last a gleam
Of dawning light turned thitherward in haste
His travelled steps: far distant he descries,
Ascending by degrees magnificent
Up to the wall of Heaven, a structure high;
At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared
The work as of a kingly palace-gate,
With frontispiece of diamond and gold
Embellished; thick with sparkling orient gems
The portal shone, inimitable on earth
By model, or by shading pencil drawn.
The stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw
Angels ascending and descending, bands
Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled
To Padan-Aram, in the field of Luz,
Dreaming by night under the open sky,
And waking, cried, "This is the gate of Heaven!"
Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes
Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flowed
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
Who after came from earth, sailing, arrived,
Wafted by angels; or flew o'er the lake,
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.
The stairs were then let down, whether to dare
The fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss:

Direct against which opened from beneath,
Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,
A passage down to the earth—a passage wide—
Wider by far than that of after-times
Over Mount Sion, and, though that were large,
Over the Promised Land to God so dear;
By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,
On high behests his angels to and fro
Passed frequent, and his eye with choice regard,
From Paneäs, the fount of Jordan's flood,
To Beërsāba, where the Holy Land
Borders on Egypt and the Arabian shore:
So wide the opening seemed, where bounds were set
To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.
Satan from hence, now on the lower stair,
That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven gate,
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
Of all this world at once. As when a scout,
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers, unaware,
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen, or some renowned metropolis,
With glistering spires and pinnacles adorned,
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams:
Such wonder seized, though after Heaven seen,
The spirit malign; but much more envy seized,
At sight of all this world beheld so fair.
Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood
So high above the circling canopy
Of night's extended shade), from eastern point
Of Libra, to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda, far off Atlantic seas,
Beyond the horizon: then from pole to pole
He views in breadth; and, without longer pause,
Downright into the world's first region throws
His flight precipitant; and winds with ease
Through the pure marble air his óblique way,
Amongst innumerable stars—that shone

Stars distant, but nigh hand seemed other worlds;
Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,
Like those Hesperian gardens, famed of old,
Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales,
Thrice happy isles! But who dwelt happy there
He stayed not to inquire. Above them all,
The golden Sun, in splendour likest Heaven,
Allured his eye: thither his course he bends
Through the calm firmament, (but up or down,
By centre or eccentric, hard to tell,
Or longitude), where the great luminary,
Aloof the vulgar constellations thick,
That from his lordly eye keep distance due,
Dispenses light from far: they, as they move
Their starry dance in numbers that compute
Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp
Turn swift their various motions; or are turned
By his magnetic beam, that gently warms
The universe, and to each inward part
With gentle penetration, though unseen,
Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep;
So wondrously was set his station bright.
There lands the fiend; a spot like which, perhaps,
Astronomer in the sun's lucent orb,
Through his glazed optic tube, yet never saw.
The place he found beyond expression bright,
Compared with aught on earth, metal or stone:
Not all parts like, but all alike informed
With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire;
If metal, part seemed gold, part silver clear;
If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,
Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone
In Aaron's breastplate; and a stone besides
Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen—
That stone, or like to that, which here below
Philosophers in vain so long have sought—
In vain, though by their powerful art they bind
Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound,
In various shapes, old Proteus from the sea,
Drained through a limbeck to his native form.

What wonder, then, if fields and regions here
Breathe forth elixir pure, and rivers run
Potable gold, when, with one virtuous touch,
The arch-chemic sun, so far from us remote,
Produces, with terrestrial humour mixed,
Here, in the dark, so many precious things,
Of colour glorious and effect so rare?
Here matter new to gaze the devil met
Undazzled: far and wide his eye commands;
For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,
But all sunshine, as when his beams at noon
Culminate from the equator, as they now
Shot upward still direct, whence no way round
Shadow from body opaque can fall; and the air,
No where so clear, sharpened his visual ray
To objects distant far, whereby he soon
Saw within ken a glorious angel stand—
The same whom John saw also in the sun:
His back was turned, but not his brightness hid;
Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar
Circled his head; nor less his locks behind
Illustrious on his shoulders fledge with wings
Lay waving round: on some great charge employed
He seemed, or fixed in cogitation deep.
Glad was the spirit impure, as now in hope
To find who might direct his wandering flight
To Paradise, the happy seat of man,
His journey's end, and our beginning woe.
But first he casts to change his proper shape;
Which else might work him danger or delay:
And now a stripling Cherub he appears,
Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb
Suitable grace diffused, so well he feigned;
Under a coronet his flowing hair
In curls on either cheek played; wings he wore
Of many a coloured plume, sprinkled with gold;
His habit fit for speed succinct; and held
Before his decent steps a silver wand.
He drew not nigh unheard; the angel bright,

Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turned,
Admonished by his ear; and straight was known
The archangel Uriel, one of the seven
Who, in God's presence, nearest to his throne,
Stand ready at command, and are his eyes
That run through all the Heavens, or down to the Earth
Bear his swift errands, over moist and dry,
O'er sea and land: him Satan thus accosts:
"Uriel! for thou of those seven spirits that stand
"In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright,
"The first art wont his great authentic will
"Interpreter through highest Heaven to bring,
"Where all his sons thy embassy attend;
"And here art likeliest, by supreme decree,
"Like honour to obtain, and, as his eye,
"To visit oft this new creation round;
"Unspeakable desire to see and know
"All these his wondrous works, but chiefly man,
"His chief delight and favour,—him for whom
"All these his works so wondrous he ordained,
"Hath brought me from the quires of Cherubim
"Alone thus wandering. Brightest Seraph! tell
"In which of all these shining orbs hath man
"His fixèd seat, or fixèd seat hath none,
"But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell;
"That I may find him, and, with secret gaze,
"Or open admiration, him behold,
"On whom the great Creator hath bestowed
"Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces poured;
"That both in him and all things, as is meet,
"The universal Maker we may praise;
"Who justly hath driven out his rebel foes
"To deepest Hell; and, to repair that loss,
"Created this new happy race of men
"To serve him better: wise are all his ways!"
So spake the false dissembler unperceived;
For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy (the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will, through Heaven and Earth:

And oft, though Wisdom wake, Suspicion sleeps
At Wisdom's gate, and to Simplicity
Resigns her charge, while Goodness things no ill
Where no ill seems), which now for once beguiled
Uriel, though regent of the sun, and held
The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heaven:
Who, to the fraudulent impostor foul,
In his uprightness, answer thus returned:
"Fair angel! thy desire, which tends to know
" The works of God, thereby to glorify
" The great Work-master, leads to no excess
" That reaches blame, but rather merits praise
" The more it seems excess, that led thee hither
" From thy empyreal mansion thus alone,
" To witness with thine eyes what some, perhaps,
" Contented with report, hear only in Heaven;
" For wonderful indeed are all his works,
" Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
" Had in remembrance always with delight!
" But what created mind can comprehend
" Their number; or the wisdom infinite
" That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
" I saw when, at his word, the formless mass,
" This world's material mould, came to a heap:
" Confusion heard his voice, and wild Uproar
" Stood ruled; stood vast infinitude confined;
" Till at his second bidding darkness fled,
" Light shone, and order from disorder sprung.
" Swift to their several quarters hasted then
" The cumbrous elements, earth, flood, air, fire;
" And this ethereal quintessence of Heaven
" Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
" That rolled orbicular, and turned to stars
" Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move;
" Each had his place appointed, each his course:
" The rest in circuit walls this universe.
" Look downward on that globe, whose hither side
" With light from hence, though but reflected, shines:
" That place is Earth, the seat of man; that light
" His day, which else, as the other hemisphere,

" Night would invade; but there the neighbouring Moon,
" (So call that opposite fair star,) her aid
" Timely interposes; and her monthly round
" Still ending, still renewing, through mid Heaven,
" With borrowed light her countenance triform
" Hence fills, and empties, to enlighten the Earth;
" And in her pale dominion checks the night.
" That spot to which I point is Paradise,
" Adam's abode; those lofty shades his bower:
" Thy way thou canst not miss,—me mine requires."
Thus said, he turned; and Satan, bowing low,
(As to superior Spirits is wont in Heaven,
Where honour due, and reverence, none neglects,)
Took leave, and toward the coast of Earth beneath,
Down from the ecliptic, sped with hoped success,
Throws his steep flight in many an airy wheel,
Nor stayed, till on Niphates' top he lights.

Fourth Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

SATAN, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions,—fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil, journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described; overleaps the bounds; sits in the shape of a cormorant on the Tree of Life, as the highest in the garden, to look about him. The garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; overhears their discourse; thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of under penalty of death; and thereon intends to found his temptation, by seducing them to transgress: then leaves them awhile to know further of their state by some other means. Meanwhile Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil spirit had escaped the deep, and passed at noon by his sphere in the shape of a good angel down to Paradise, discovered afterwards by his furious gestures on the mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest; their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the round of Paradise, appoints two strong angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping; there they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers; prepares resistance; but, hindered by a sign from Heaven, flies out of Paradise.

O, FOR that warning voice, which he who saw
The Apocalypse heard cry in Heaven aloud,
Then when the Dragon, put to second rout,
Came furious down to be revenged on men,
"Woe to the inhabitants on earth!" that now
While time was, our first parents had been warned
The coming of their sacred foe, and scaped,—

Haply so scaped his mortal snare! for now
Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down,
The tempter, ere the accuser, of mankind,
To wreak on innocent frail man his loss
Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell:
Yet not rejoicing in his speed, though bold
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt; which, nigh the birth
Now rolling, boils in his tumultuous breast,
And like a devilish engine back recoils
Upon himself: horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The Hell within him; for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step, no more than from himself, can fly
By change of place: now conscience wakes despair
That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be,—
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue.
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad;
Sometimes towards Heaven and the full-blazing Sun,
Which now sat high in his meridian tower:
Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began:
" O thou, that, with surpassing glory crowned,
" Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god
" Of this new world! at whose sight all the stars
" Hide their diminished heads; to thee I call,
" But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
" O Sun! to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
" That bring to my remembrance from what state
" I fell,—how glorious once above thy sphere,
" Till pride, and, worse, ambition threw me down,
" Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King!
" Ah, wherefore! he deserved no such return
" From me, whom he created what I was
" In that bright eminence, and with his good
" Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
" What could be less than to afford him praise,
" The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,

" How due! Yet all his good proved ill in me,
" And wrought but malice: lifted up so high,
" I sdained subjection, and thought one step higher
" Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
" The debt immense of endless gratitude,—
" So burdensome; still paying, still to owe,—
" Forgetful what from him I still received;
" And understood not that a grateful mind
" By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
" Indebted and discharged: what burden then?
" O had his powerful destiny ordained
" Me some inferior angel, I had stood
" Then happy! no unbounded hope had raised
" Ambition. Yet why not? some other power
" As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
" Drawn to his part; but other powers as great
" Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
" Or from without, to all temptations armed.
" Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
" Thou hadst: whom hast thou then or what to accuse,
" But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
" Be then his love accursed! since, love or hate,
" To me alike it deals eternal woe.
" Nay, cursed be thou! since, against this, thy will
" Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
" Me miserable! which way shall I fly
" Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
" Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
" And in the lowest deep a lower deep
" Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
" To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
" O, then, at last relent: is there no place
" Left for repentance? none for pardon left?
" None left but by submission; and that word
" Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
" Among the Spirits beneath; whom I seduced
" With other promises, and other vaunts
" Than to submit; boasting I could subdue
" The Omnipotent. Ah me! they little know
" How dearly I abide that boast so vain;

" Under what torments inwardly I groan,
" While they adore me on the throne of Hell.
" With diadem and sceptre high advanced,
" The lower still I fall, only supreme
" In misery: such joy ambition finds.
" But say I could repent, and could obtain,
" By act of grace, my former state; how soon
" Would height recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
" What feigned submission swore! Ease would recant
" Vows made in pain, as violent and void.
" For never can true reconcilement grow
" Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep;
" Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
" And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
" Short intermission, bought with double smart.
" This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
" From granting he, as I from begging peace.
" All hope excluded thus; behold, instead
" Of us outcast, exiled, his new delight,
" Mankind, created, and for him this world.
" So farewell, hope! and with hope, farewell, fear!
" Farewell, remorse! all good to me is lost:
" Evil, be thou my good! by thee at least
" Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,—
" By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;—
" As man ere long, and this new world, shall know."
Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face
Thrice changed with pale, ire, envy, and despair:
Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld:
For heavenly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware,
Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm,
Artificer of fraud; and was the first
That practised falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge.
Yet not enough had practised to deceive
Uriel once warned; whose eye pursued him down
The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount
Saw him disfigured, more than could befall

Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce
He marked, and mad demeanour, then alone,
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.
So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champain head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied; and overhead up grew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,—
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,—
A sylvan scene; and, as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up sprung;
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighbouring round:
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees loaden with fairest fruit;
Blossoms and fruits at once, of golden hue,
Appeared, with gay enamelled colours mixed;
On which the sun more glad impressed his beams,
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath showered the earth; so lovely seemed
That landskip: and of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair: now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabëan odours from the spicy shores
Of Araby the Blest; with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and, many a league,
Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles:
So entertained those odorous sweets the fiend
Who came their bane; though with them better pleased

Than Asmodëus with the fishy fume
That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent
From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.
Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill
Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow;
But further way found none; so thick entwined,
As one continued brake, the undergrowth
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed
All path of man or beast that passed that way.
One gate there only was, and that looked east
On the other side: which when the arch-felon saw,
Due entrance he disdained; and, in contempt,
At one slight bound high overleaped all bound
Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within
Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve
In hurdled cotes, amid the field secure,
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold;
Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash
Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,
Cross barred and bolted fast, fear no assault,
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles;
So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold;
So since into his church lewd hirelings climb.
Thence up he flew; and on the Tree of Life,
(The middle tree and highest there that grew,)
Sat like a cormorant: yet not true life
Thereby regained, but sat devising death
To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant, but only used
For prospect, what, well used, had been the pledge
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him; but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
Beneath him, with new wonder, now he views,
To all delight of human sense exposed,
In narrow room, Nature's whole wealth, yea, more,

A Heaven on Earth; for blissful Paradise
Of God the garden was, by him in the east
Of Eden planted: Eden stretched her line
From Auran eastward to the royal towers
Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,
Or where the sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telassar: in this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordained.
Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold; and next to life,
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by,—
Knowledge of good, bought dear, by knowing ill.
Southward through Eden went a river large,
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
Passed underneath ingulfed; for God had thrown
That mountain as his garden mould, high raised
Upon the rapid current, which, through veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst up drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Watered the garden; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears;
And now, divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country, whereof here needs no account;
But rather to tell how—if art could tell—
How from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendent shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise; which not nice art
In beds and curious knots, but nature boon
Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain;
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpiercèd shade
Imbrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view;

Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm ;
Others, whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
Hung amiable, (Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only,) and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed ;
Or palmy hillock, or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her stores,—
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant : meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills, dispersed ; or in a lake,
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
The birds their quire apply ; airs,—vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on the eternal spring. Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Prosérpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world ; nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne by Orontes, and the inspired
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive ; nor that Nyseian isle
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
(Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove),
Hid Amalthëa, and her florid son,
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhëa's eye ;
Nor where Abassin kings their issue guard,
Mount Amara, (though this by some supposed
True Paradise,) under the Ethiop line
By Nilus' head, inclosed with shining rock,
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
From this Assyrian garden, where the fiend
Saw, undelighted, all delight,—all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange.

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,—
Godlike erect, with native honour clad
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all:
And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure,—
Severe, but in true filial freedom placed;
Whence true authority in men: though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal, seemed;
For contemplation he and valour formed,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He, for God only; she, for God in him.
His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
She, as a veil, down to the slender waist
Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils; which implied
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded,—by him best received,
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed;
Then was not guilty shame: dishonest shame
Of Nature's works,—honour dishonourable,
Sin-bred! how have ye troubled all mankind
With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
And banished from man's life his happiest life,
Simplicity and spotless innocence!
So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight
Of God or angel, for they thought no ill:
So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's embraces met;
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade, that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-side
They sat them down; and, after no more toil

Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed
To recommend cool zephyr, and made ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell—
Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers.
The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream:
Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
Fair couple, linked in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking played
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den:
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid: bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gambolled before them; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis: close the serpent sly,
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His braided train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded: others on the grass
Couched, and, now filled with pasture, gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating; for the Sun,
Declined, was hasting now with prone career
To the ocean isles, and in the ascending scale
Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose:
When Satan, still in gaze, as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad:
" O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?
" Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
" Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps,
" Not spirits; yet to heavenly spirits bright
" Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue
" With wonder, and could love; so lively shines
" In them divine resemblance, and such grace
" The hand that formed them on their shape hath poured!
" Ah, gentle pair! ye little think how nigh
" Your change approaches, when all these delights

" Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe;—
" More woe, the more your taste is now of joy!
" Happy, but for so happy ill secured
" Long to continue; and this high seat, your Heaven,
" Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe
" As now is entered! yet no purposed foe
" To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
" Though I unpitied. League with you I seek,
" And mutual amity, so strait, so close,
" That I with you must dwell, or you with me,
" Henceforth: my dwelling haply may not please,
" Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such
" Accept, your Maker's work; he gave it me,
" Which I as freely give: Hell shall unfold,
" To entertain you two, her widest gates,
" And send forth all her kings: there will be room,
" Not like these narrow limits, to receive
" Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
" Thank him who puts me loth to this revenge
" On you, who wrong me not, for him who wronged.
" And should I at your harmless innocence
" Melt, as I do, yet public reason just,
" Honour and empire, with revenge, enlarged,
" By conquering this new world, compels me now
" To do what else, though damned, I should abhor."
So spake the fiend, and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.
Then, from his lofty stand on that high tree,
Down he alights among the sportful herd
Of those four-footed kinds—himself now one,
Now other, as their shape served best his end—
Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,
To mark what of their state he more might learn,
By word or action marked: about them round,
A lion now, he stalks with fiery glare;
Then, as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play,
Straight couches close; then, rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both,

Griped in each paw: when Adam, first of men,
To first of women, Eve, thus moving speech,
Turned him, all ear, to hear new utterance flow:
" Sole partner, and sole part, of all these joys,
" Dearer thyself than all! needs must the Power
" That made us, and for us this ample world,
" Be infinitely good, and of his good
" As liberal and free as infinite;
" That raised us from the dust, and placed us here
" In all this happiness, who at his hand
" Have nothing merited, nor can perform
" Aught whereof he hath need; he who requires
" From us no other service than to keep
" This one—this easy charge: of all the trees
" In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
" So various, not to taste that only Tree
" Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life:
" So near grows death to life! whate'er death is;
" Some dreadful thing no doubt: for well thou know'st
" God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree;
" The only sign of our obedience left
" Among so many signs of power and rule
" Conferred upon us, and dominion given
" Over all other creatures that possess
" Earth, air, and sea. Then, let us not think hard
" One easy prohibition, who enjoy
" Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
" Unlimited of manifold delights:
" But let us ever praise him, and extol
" His bounty, following our delightful task
" To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers;
" Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet."
To whom thus Eve replied: " O thou, for whom,
" And from whom I was formed, flesh of my flesh;
" And without whom am to no end; my guide
" And head! what thou hast said is just and right.
" For we to him indeed all praises owe,
" And daily thanks: I chiefly, who enjoy
" So far the happier lot, enjoying thee,
" Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou

" Like consort to thyself canst no where find.
" That day I oft remember, when from sleep
" I first awaked, and found myself reposed,
" Under a shade, on flowers; much wondering where
" And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
" Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
" Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
" Into a liquid plain; then stood unmoved,
" Pure as the expanse of Heaven: I thither went
" With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
" On the green bank, to look into the clear
" Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.
" As I bent down to look, just opposite
" A shape within the watery gleam appeared,
" Bending to look on me: I started back:
" It started back: but pleased I soon returned:
" Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
" Of sympathy and love: there I had fixed
" Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
" Had not a voice thus warned me: 'What thou seest,
" What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
" With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
" And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
" Thy coming, and thy soft embraces;—he
" Whose image thou art: him thou shalt enjoy
" Inseparably thine; to him shalt bear
" Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
" Mother of human race.' What could I do,
" But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
" Till I espied thee, fair indeed, and tall,
" Under a platane; yet, methought, less fair,
" Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
" Than that smooth watery image. Back I turned:
" Thou following criedst aloud, 'Return, fair Eve!
" Whom fliest thou? whom thou fliest, of him thou art,
" His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
" Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
" Substantial life; to have thee by my side
" Henceforth an individual solace dear:
" Part of my soul, I seek thee, and thee claim,

" My other half!' With that thy gentle hand
" Seized mine: I yielded; and from that time see
" How beauty is excelled by manly grace
" And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."
So spake our general mother; and, with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreproved,
And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned
On our first father; half her swelling breast
Naked met his, under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid: he, in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds
That shed May flowers; and pressed her matron lip
With kisses pure. Aside the devil turned
For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained:
" Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two,
" Imparadised in one another's arms,
" (The happier Eden!) shall enjoy their fill
" Of bliss on bliss; while I to hell am thrust,
" Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
" Among our other torments not the least,
" Still unfulfilled, with pain of longing pines.
" Yet let me not forget what I have gained
" From their own mouths: all is not theirs, it seems:
" One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge called,
" Forbidden them to taste: knowledge forbidden!
" Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord
" Envy them that? Can it be sin to know?
" Can it be death? And do they only stand
" By ignorance? Is that their happy state,
" The proof of their obedience and their faith?
" O fair foundation laid whereon to build
" Their ruin! Hence I will excite their minds
" With more desire to know, and to reject
" Envious commands, invented with design
" To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt
" Equal with gods: aspiring to be such,
" They taste, and die! what likelier can ensue?

" But first, with narrow search, I must walk round
" This garden, and no corner leave unspied;
" A chance but chance may lead where I may meet
" Some wandering spirit of Heaven, by fountain side,
" Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw
" What farther would be learned. Live while ye may,
" Yet happy pair! enjoy, till I return,
" Short pleasures; for long woes are to succeed."
So saying, his proud step he scornful turned,
But with sly circumspection, and began
Through wood, through waste, o'er hill, o'er dale, his roam.
Meanwhile, in utmost longitude, where Heaven
With Earth and Ocean meets, the setting sun
Slowly descended, and, with right aspéct
Against the eastern gate of Paradise
Levelled his evening rays: it was a rock
Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
Accessible from earth, one entrance high;
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat,
Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting night;
About him exercised heroic games
The unarmèd youth of Heaven; but nigh at hand
Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears,
Hung high, with diamond flaming, and with gold.
Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
On a sunbéam, swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired
Impress the air, and show the mariner
From what point of his compass to beware
Impetuous winds: he thus began in haste:
" Gabriel! to thee thy course by lot hath given
" Charge and strict watch, that to this happy place
" No evil thing approach, or enter in.
" This day, at height of noon, came to my sphere
" A spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know
" More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly man,
" God's latest image; I described his way,

" Bent all on speed, and marked his airy gait;
" But, in the mount that lies from Eden north,
" Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks
" Alien from Heaven, with passions foul obscured:
" Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade
" Lost sight of him. One of the banished crew,
" I fear, hath ventured from the deep, to raise
" New troubles: him thy care must be to find."
To whom the wingèd warrior thus returned:
" Uriel! no wonder if thy perfect sight,
" Amid the sun's bright circle where thou sitt'st,
" See far and wide: in at this gate none pass
" The vigilance here placed, but such as come
" Well known from Heaven; and since meridian hour
" No creature thence. If spirit of other sort,
" So minded, have o'erleaped these earthly bounds
" On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclúde
" Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
" But if within the circuit of these walks
" In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom
" Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know."
So promised he; and Uriel to his charge
Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised
Bore him slope downwards to the Sun, now fallen
Beneath the Azorès; whether the prime orb,
Incredible how swift, had thither rolled
Diurnal; or this less volúbil Earth,
By shorter flight to the east, had left him there,
Arraying with reflected purple and gold
The clouds that on his western throne attend.
Now came still evening on, and twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad:
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
Were slunk;—all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleased: now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires; Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the Moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,

Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.
When Adam thus to Eve: "Fair consort! the hour
"Of night, and all things now retired to rest,
"Mind us of like repose; since God hath set
"Labour and rest, as day and night, to men
"Successive; and the timely dew of sleep,
"Now falling with soft slumberous weight, inclines
"Our eyelids: other creatures all day long
"Rove idle, unemployed, and less need rest:
"Man hath his daily work of body or mind
"Appointed, which declares his dignity,
"And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;
"While other animals inactive range,
"And of their doings God takes no account.
"To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
"With first approach of light, we must be risen,
"And at our pleasant labour, to reform
"Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green,
"Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
"That mock our scant manuring, and require
"More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth:
"Those blossoms also, and those drooping gums,
"That lie bestrown, unsightly and unsmooth,
"Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease;
"Meanwhile, as Nature wills, night bids us rest."
To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned:
"My author and disposer! what thou bidst
"Unargued I obey: so God ordains.
"God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
"Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise.
"With thee conversing I forget all time;
"All seasons, and their change,—all please alike.
"Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,
"With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the Sun,
"When first on this delightful land he spreads
"His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
"Glistering with dew; fragrant the fertile Earth
"After soft showers; and sweet the coming on
"Of grateful Evening mild; then silent Night,

" With this her solemn bird, and this fair Moon,
" And these the gems of Heaven, her starry train.
" But neither breath of Morn, when she ascends
" With charm of earliest birds; nor rising Sun
" On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
" Glistering with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
" Nor grateful Evening mild; nor silent night,
" With this her solemn bird; nor walk by Moon,
" Or glittering starlight, without thee is sweet.
" But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom
" This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"
To whom our general ancestor replied:
" Daughter of God and Man, accomplished Eve,
" Those have their course to finish, round the Earth,
" By morrow evening; and from land to land
" In order, though to nations yet unborn,
" Ministering light prepared, they set and rise;
" Lest total Darkness should by night regain
" Her old possession, and extinguish life
" In Nature and all things; which these soft fires
" Not only enlighten, but, with kindly heat
" Of various influence, foment and warm,
" Temper or nourish; or in part shed down
" Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow
" On earth, made hereby apter to receive
" Perfection from the sun's more potent ray.
" These then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
" Shine not in vain; nor think, though men were none,
" That Heaven would want spectators, God want praise:
" Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
" Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep;
" All these, with ceaseless praise, his works behold
" Both day and night. How often from the steep
" Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard
" Celestial voices, to the midnight air
" (Sole, or responsive each to other's note,)
" Singing their great Creator! Oft in bands
" While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
" With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds,
" In full harmonic number joined their songs

"Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven."
Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed
On to their blissful bower: it was a place
Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he framed
All things to Man's delightful use: the roof,
Of thickest covert, was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf: on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
Fenced up the verdant wall: each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
Mosaic: under foot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broidered the ground, more coloured than with stone
Of costliest emblem: other creature here,
Bird, beast, insect, or worm, durst enter none;
Such was their awe of man. In shadier bower,
More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned,
Pan or Sylvanus never slept; nor Nymph
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
Espousèd Eve decked her first nuptial bed;
And heavenly quires the hymenean sung,
What day the genial angel to our sire
Brought her, in naked beauty more adorned,
More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods
Endowed with all their gifts;—and, O too like
In sad event,—when, to the unwiser son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.
Thus, at their shady lodge arrived, both stood,
Both turned, and under open sky adored
The God that made both sky, air, earth, and Heaven,
Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe,
And starry pole: "Thou also madest the night,
"Maker Omnipotent, and thou the day,
"Which we, in our appointed work employed,
"Have finished, happy in our mutual help

" And mutual love,—the crown of all our bliss
" Ordained by thee,—and this delicious place,
" For us too large, where thy abundance wants
" Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
" But thou hast promised from us two a race
" To fill the earth, who shall with us extol
" Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
" And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep."
This said unanimous, and other rites
Observing none, but adoration pure
Which God likes best, into their inmost bower
Handed they went; and, eased the putting off
These troublesome disguises which we wear,
Straight side by side were laid; nor turned, I ween,
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
Mysterious of connubial love refused:
Whatever hypocrites austerely talk
Of purity, and place, and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
Our Maker bids increase: who bids abstain
But our destroyer; foe to God and Man?
Hail, wedded love! mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring; sole propriety
In Paradise, of all things common else!
By thee adulterous lust was driven from men
Among the bestial herds to range: by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Far be it, that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place;
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets!
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.
Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings;
Reigns here and revels: not in the bought smile
Of harlots,—loveless, joyless, unendeared,
Casual fruition,—nor in court-amours,

Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
Or serenade, which the starved lover sings
To his proud fair,—best quitted with disdain.
These, lulled by nightingales, embracing slept;
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Showered roses, which the morn repaired. Sleep on,
Blest pair! and, O, yet happiest if ye seek
No happier state, and know to know no more!
Now had Night measured with her shadowy cone
Half way up hill this vast sublunar vault;
And from their ivory port the Cherubim,
Forth issuing at the accustomed hour, stood armed
To their night-watches in warlike parade;
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake:
"Uzziel! half these draw off, and coast the south
"With strictest watch; these other wheel the north:
"Our circuit meets full west." As flame they part,
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.
From these two strong and subtle spirits he called
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge:
"Ithuriel and Zephon! with winged speed
"Search through this garden, leave unsearched no nook;
"But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,
"Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.
"This evening from the sun's decline arrived,
"Who tells of some infernal spirit seen
"Hitherward bent, (who could have thought?) escaped
"The bars of Hell, on errand bad, no doubt:
"Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring."
So saying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the moon; these to the bower direct
In search of whom they sought: him there they found,
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
Assaying, by his devilish art, to reach
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions, as he list, phantasms, and dreams;
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise,
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure; thence raise,
At least, distempered, discontented thoughts,

Vain thoughts, vain aims, inordinate desires,
Blown up with high conceits engendering pride.
Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
Touched lightly; (for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness:) up he starts
Discovered and surprised. As, when a spark
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
Fit for the tun, some magazine to store
Against a rumoured war, the smutty grain,
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air;
So started up, in his own shape, the fiend.
Back stepped those two fair angels, half amazed
So sudden to behold the grisly king;
Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost him soon:
" Which of those rebel spirits, adjudged to Hell,
" Comest thou, escaped thy prison? and, transformed,
" Why sat'st thou, like an enemy in wait,
" Here watching at the head of these that sleep?"
" Know ye not then," said Satan, filled with scorn,
" Know ye not me? ye knew me once no mate
" For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar:
" Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,
" The lowest of your throng: or, if ye know,
" Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
" Your message,—like to end as much in vain?"
To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn:
" Think not, revolted spirit! thy shape the same,
" Or undiminished brightness, to be known,
" As when thou stood'st in Heaven upright and pure:
" That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
" Departed from thee; and thou resemblest now
" Thy sin, and place of doom,—obscure and foul.
" But come! for thou, be sure, shalt give account
" To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
" This place inviolable, and these from harm."
So spake the Cherub; and his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible: abashed the devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw

Virtue in her shape how lovely;—saw, and pined
His loss; but chiefly to find here observed
His lustre visibly impaired; yet seemed
Undaunted. "If I must contend," said he,
"Best, with the best, the sender not the sent,
"Or all at once; more glory will be won,
"Or less be lost." "Thy fear," said Zephon bold,
"Will save us trial what the least can do
"Single against thee, wicked, and thence weak."
The fiend replied not, overcome with rage;
But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty on,
Champing his iron curb: to strive, or fly,
He held it vain; awe from above had quelled
His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh
The western point, where those half-rounding guards
Just met, and, closing, stood in squadron joined,
Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,
Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud:
"O friends! I hear the tread of nimble feet
"Hasting this way, and now, by glimpse, discern
"Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade;
"And with them comes a third, of regal port,
"But faded splendour wan; who, by his gait,
"And fierce demeanour, seems the Prince of Hell,
"Not likely to part hence without contést:
"Stand firm; for in his look defiance lours."
He scarce had ended, when those two approached,
And brief related whom they brought—where found—
How busied—in what form and posture couched.
To whom, with stern regard, thus Gabriel spake:
"Why hast thou, Satan! broke the bounds prescribed
"To thy transgressions, and disturbed the charge
"Of others, who approve not to transgress
"By thy example, but have power and right
"To question thy bold entrance on this place;
"Employed, it seems, to violate sleep, and those
"Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss?"
To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow:
"Gabriel! thou hadst in Heaven the esteem of wise,
"And such I held thee; but this question asked

" Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?
" Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,
" Though thither doomed? Thou wouldst thyself, no doubt;
" And boldly venture to whatever place
" Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change
" Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
" Dole with delight; which in this place I sought:—
" To thee no reason, who know'st only good,
" But evil hast not tried.—And wilt object
" His will who bounds us? Let him surer bar
" His iron gates, if he intends our stay
" In that dark durance! thus much what was asked.
" The rest is true; they found me where they say;
" But that implies not violence or harm."
Thus he in scorn. The warlike angel moved
Disdainfully, half smiling, thus replied:
" O loss of one in Heaven to judge of wise,
" Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew!
" And now returns him, from his prison scaped,
" Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
" Or not, who ask what boldness brought him hither,
" Unlicensed, from his bounds in Hell prescribed:
" So wise he judges it to fly from pain,
" However, and to scape his punishment.
" So judge thou still, presumptuous! till the wrath,
" Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight
" Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,
" Which taught thee yet no better, that no pain
" Can equal anger infinite provoked.
" But wherefore thou alone? wherefore with thee
" Came not all Hell broke loose? Is pain to them
" Less pain—less to be fled; or thou than they
" Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief!
" The first in flight from pain! hadst thou alleged
" To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
" Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive."
To which the fiend thus answered, frowning stern
" Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
" Insulting angel! well thou knowest I stood
" Thy fiercest, when, in battle, to thy aid,

" The blasting volleyed thunder made all speed
" And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.
" But still thy words at random, as before,
" Argue thy inexperience, what behoves,
" From hard assays and ill successes past,
" A faithful leader,—not to hazard all,
" Through ways of danger, by himself untried:
" I therefore, I alone, first undertook
" To wing the desolate abyss, and spy
" This new-created world, whereof in Hell
" Fame is not silent; here in hope to find
" Better abode, and my afflicted powers
" To settle here on earth, or in mid air;
" Though, for possession, put to try once more
" What thou, and thy gay legions, dare against;
" Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
" High up in Heaven, with songs to hymn his throne,
" And practised distances to cringe, not fight."
To whom the warrior angel soon replied:
" To say and straight unsay, pretending first
" Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,
" Argues no leader, but a liar traced,
" Satan! and couldst thou faithful add? O name,
" O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!
" Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?
" Army of fiends, fit body to fit head!
" Was this your discipline and faith engaged—
" Your military obedience, to dissolve
" Allegiance to the acknowledged Power supreme?
" And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
" Patron of liberty! who more than thou
" Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored
" Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope
" To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?
" But mark what I arreed thee now; Avaunt!
" Fly thither whence thou fledst! if, from this hour
" Within these hallowed limits thou appear,
" Back to the infernal pit I drag thee chained,
" And seal thee so, as henceforth not to scorn
" The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred."

So threatened he: but Satan to no threats
Gave heed, but waxing more in rage replied:
"Then, when I am thy captive, talk of chains,
"Proud limitary Cherub! but ere then
"Far heavier load thyself expect to feel
"From my prevailing arm; though Heaven's King
"Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,
"Used to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels
"In progress through the road of Heaven star-paved."
While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright
Turned fiery red, sharpening in moonèd horns
Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported spears; as thick as when a field
Of Ceres, ripe for harvest, waving bends
Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind
Sways them; the careful ploughman doubting stands,
Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves
Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarmed,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat Horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp
What seemed both spear and shield. Now dreadful deeds
Might have ensued; nor only Paradise,
In this commotion, but the starry cope
Of Heaven perhaps, or all the elements
At least, had gone to wrack, disturbed and torn
With violence of this conflict; had not soon
The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
Hung forth in Heaven his golden scales, yet seen
Betwixt Astrea and the Scorpion sign,
Wherein all things created first he weighed,
The pendulous round Earth, with balanced air
In counterpoise; now, ponders all events,
Battles, and realms: in these he put two weights,
The sequel each of parting and of fight:
The latter quick upflew and kicked the beam;
Which Gabriel spying, thus bespake the fiend:
"Satan! I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine;
"Neither our own, but given: what folly then

" To boast what arms can do! since thine no more
" Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now
" To trample thee as mire: for proof look up,
" And read thy lot in yon celestial sign;
" Where thou art weighed, and shown how light, how weak,
" If thou resist." The fiend looked up, and knew
His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled
Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.

Fifth Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

MORNING approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her: they come forth to their day-labours: their morning hymn at the door of their bower. God, to render man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand, who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise; his appearance described; his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise got together by Eve; their discourse at table: Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates, at Adam's request, who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in Heaven, and the occasion thereof; how he drew his legions after him to the parts of the north, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel a seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam waked, so customed; for his sleep
Was airy-light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapours bland, which the only sound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough: so much the more
His wonder was to find unwakened Eve,
With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,
As through unquiet rest: he, on his side
Leaning half-raised, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamoured, and beheld
Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces; then, with voice

Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whispered thus: "Awake,
"My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
"Heaven's last, best gift, my ever new delight!
"Awake; the morning shines, and the fresh field
"Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
"Our tended plants,—how blows the citron grove,—
"What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,—
"How Nature paints her colours,—how the bee
"Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet."
Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye
On Adam; whom embracing, thus she spake:
"O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
"My glory, my perfection! glad I see
"Thy face, and morn returned; for I this night
"(Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed,
"(If dreamed,) not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
"Works of day past, or morrow's next design;
"But of offence and trouble, which my mind
"Knew never till this irksome night. Methought,
"Close at mine ear, one called me forth to walk
"With gentle voice; I thought it thine: it said,
"'Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,
"The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
"To the night-warbling bird, that now awake
"Tunes sweetest his love-laboured song; now reigns
"Full-orbed the Moon, and with more pleasing light
"Shadowy sets off the face of things; in vain,
"If none regard: Heaven wakes with all his eyes,
"Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire?
"In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
"Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.'
"I rose, as at thy call, but found thee not;
"To find thee I directed then my walk;
"And on, methought, alone I passed through ways
"That brought me on a sudden to the tree
"Of interdicted knowledge: fair it seemed,—
"Much fairer to my fancy than by day:
"And, as I wondering looked, beside it stood
"One shaped and winged like one of those from Heaven

" By us oft seen; his dewy locks distilled
" Ambrosia: on that tree he also gazed:
" And, 'O fair plant,' said he, 'with fruit surcharged!
" Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,
" Nor God, nor Man? is knowledge so despised?
" Or envy, or what reserve, forbids to taste?
" Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
" Longer thy offered good; why else set here?'
" This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm
" He plucked,—he tasted; me damp horror chilled
" At such bold words vouched with a deed so bold:
" But he thus, overjoyed: 'O fruit divine!
" Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt!
" Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
" For gods, yet able to make gods of men:
" And why not gods of men, since good, the more
" Communicated, more abundant grows,
" The author not impaired, but honoured more?
" Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve,
" Partake thou also; happy though thou art,
" Happier thou mayst be, worthier canst not be:
" Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods
" Thyself a goddess; not to earth confined,
" But sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes
" Ascend to Heaven, by merit thine, and see
" What life the gods live there, and such live thou!'
" So saying he drew nigh, and to me held,—
" Even to my mouth,—of that same fruit held part
" Which he had plucked: the pleasant savoury smell
" So quickened appetite, that I, methought,
" Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
" With him I flew, and underneath beheld
" The earth outstretched immense,—a prospect wide
" And various,—wondering at my flight and change
" To this high exaltation: suddenly
" My guide was gone; and I, methought, sunk down,
" And fell asleep: but, O, how glad I waked
" To find this but a dream!" Thus Eve her night
Related, and thus Adam answered sad:
" Best image of myself, and dearer half!

" The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
" Affects me equally; nor can I like
" This uncouth dream,—of evil sprung, I fear:
" Yet evil whence? in thee can harbour none,
" Created pure. But know, that in the soul
" Are many lesser faculties, that serve
" Reason as chief; among these Fancy next
" Her office holds; of all external things,
" Which the five watchful senses represent,
" She forms imaginations, airy shapes,
" Which Reason joining, or disjoining, frames
" All what we affirm, or what deny, and call
" Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
" Into her private cell, when nature rests.
" Oft in her absence mimic Fancy wakes
" To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,
" Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,
" Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
" Some such resemblances, methinks, I find
" Of our last evening's talk in this thy dream,
" But with addition strange; yet be not sad:
" Evil into the mind of God or Man
" May come and go, so unapproved; and leave
" No spot or blame behind: which gives me hope
" That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
" Waking thou never wilt consent to do.
" Be not disheartened then; nor cloud those looks,
" That wont to be more cheerful and serene
" Than when fair Morning first smiles on the world:
" And let us to our fresh employments rise,
" Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers,
" That open now their choicest bosomed smells,
" Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store."
So cheered he his fair spouse, and she was cheered;
But silently a gentle tear let fall
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair:
Two other precious drops, that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, he, ere they fell,
Kissed, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse,
And pious awe that feared to have offended.

So all was cleared, and to the field they haste.
But first, from under shady arborous roof
Soon as they forth were come to open sight
Of day-spring, and the Sun, who, scarce uprisen,
With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim,
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,
Discovering in wide landskip all the east
Of Paradise, and Eden's happy plains,
Lowly they bowed adoring; and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid
In various style: for neither various style
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung,
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence
Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse;—
More tunable than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness;—and they thus began:
"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
"Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
"Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!
"Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heavens,
"To us invisible, or dimly seen
"In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
"Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
"Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
"Angels! for ye behold him, and with songs
"And choral symphonies, day without night,
"Circle his throne rejoicing:—ye in Heaven;
"On Earth join all ye creatures to extol
"Him first, him last, him midst, and without end!
"Fairest of stars! last in the train of night,
"If better thou belong not to the dawn,—
"Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling Morn
"With thy bright circlet;—praise him in thy sphere,
"While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
"Thou Sun! of this great world both eye and soul,
"Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
"In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
"And when high noon hast gained, and when thou fall'st.
"Moon! that now meet'st the orient Sun, now flies,

" With the fixed stars,—fixed in their orb that flies;
" And ye five other wandering fires! that move
" In mystic dance, not without song, resound
" His praise, who out of darkness called up light.
" Air, and ye elements! the eldest birth
" Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run
" Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix
" And nourish all things; let your ceaseless change
" Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
" Ye mists and exhalations! that now rise
" From hill or streaming lake, dusky or gray,
" Till the Sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
" In honour to the world's great Author rise;
" Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured sky,
" Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
" Rising or falling still advance his praise.
" His praise, ye winds! that from four quarters blow,
" Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
" With every plant, in sign of worship, wave.
" Fountains! and ye that warble, as ye flow,
" Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
" Join voices, all ye living souls! ye birds,
" That singing up to Heaven-gate ascend,
" Bear on your wings, and in your notes, his praise.
" Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
" The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep!
" Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
" To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade,
" Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
" Hail, universal Lord! be bounteous still
" To give us only good; and, if the night
" Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
" Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark!"
So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts
Firm peace recovered soon, and wonted calm.
On to their morning's rural work they haste,
Among sweet dews and flowers, where any row
Of fruit-trees over-woody reached too far
Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check
Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine

To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
Her dower,—the adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves. Them, thus employed, beheld
With pity Heaven's high King, and to him called
Raphael, the sociable spirit, that deigned
To travel with Tobias, and secured
His marriage with the seven-times-wedded maid.
"Raphael," said he, "thou hear'st what stir on Earth
"Satan, from Hell scaped through the darksome gulf,
"Hath raised in Paradise; and how disturbed
"This night the human pair; how he designs,
"In them at once, to ruin all mankind.
"Go therefore, half this day, as friend with friend,
"Converse with Adam, in what bower or shade
"Thou find'st him, from the heat of noon retired
"To respite his day-labour with repast,
"Or with repose; and such discourse bring on,
"As may advise him of his happy state;
"Happiness in his power left free to will,
"Left to his own free will, his will though free,
"Yet mutable; whence warn him to beware
"He swerve not, too secure. Tell him withal
"His danger, and from whom; what enemy,
"Late fallen himself from Heaven, is plotting now
"The fall of others from like state of bliss;
"By violence? no, for that shall be withstood;
"But by deceit and lies: this let him know,
"Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend
"Surprisal, unadmonished, unforewarned."
So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfilled
All justice: nor delayed the winged saint
After his charge received; but from among
Thousand celestial ardours, where he stood
Veiled with his gorgeous wings, up springing light,
Flew through the midst of Heaven: the angelic quires,
On each hand parting, to his speed gave way
Through all the empyreal road; till, at the gate
Of Heaven arrived, the gate self-opened wide
On golden hinges turning, as, by work

Divine, the sovereign Architect had framed.
From hence (no cloud, or, to obstruct his sight,
Star interposed), however small, he sees,
Not unconform to other shining globes,
Earth, and the garden of God, with cedars crowned
Above all hills: as, when by night the glass
Of Galileo, less assured, observes
Imagined lands and regions in the Moon:
Or pilot, from amidst the Cyclades,
Delos, or Samos, first appearing, kens
A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight
He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky
Sails between worlds and worlds; with steady wing
Now on the polar winds; then, with quick fan
Winnows the buxom air; till, within soar
Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems
A phœnix, gazed by all as that sole bird,
When, to enshrine his relics in the Sun's
Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.
At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise
He lights, and to his proper shape returns,
A Seraph winged: six wings he wore, to shape
His lineaments divine: the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad came mantling o'er his breast
With regal ornament; the middle pair
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold,
And colours dipped in Heaven; the third his feet
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled
The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands
Of angels under watch; and to his state,
And to his message high, in honour rise;
For on some message high they guessed him bound.
Their glittering tents he passed, and now is come
Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,
And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm,—
A wilderness of sweets! for Nature here
Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will

Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss!
Him through the spicy forest onward come
Adam discerned, as in the door he sat
Of his cool bower, while now the mounted Sun
Shot down direct his fervid rays, to warm
Earth's inmost womb;—more warmth than Adam needs:
And Eve within, due at her hour, prepared
For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please
True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,
Berry, or grape: to whom thus Adam called:
"Haste hither, Eve! and, worth thy sight, behold,
"Eastward among those trees, what glorious shape
"Comes this way moving: (seems another morn
"Risen on mid-noon:) some great behest from Heaven
"To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe
"This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
"And, what thy stores contain, bring forth, and pour
"Abundance, fit to honour and receive
"Our heavenly stranger: well may we afford
"Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
"From large bestowed, where nature multiplies
"Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows
"More fruitful; which instructs us not to spare."
To whom thus Eve: "Adam, earth's hallowed mould
"Of God inspired! small store will serve, where store,
"All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;
"Save what by frugal storing firmness gains
"To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes:
"But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
"Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
"To entertain our angel-guest, as he
"Beholding shall confess, that here on Earth
"God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heaven."
So saying, with dispatchful looks, in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent;
What choice to choose for delicacy best;
What order, so contrived as not to mix
Tastes, not well joined, inelegant; but bring

Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change:
Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk,
Whatever Earth, all-bearing mother, yields
In India East or West, or middle shore,
In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where
Alcinous reigned; fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough, or smooth rind, or bearded husk, or shell,
She gathers, tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand: for drink the grape
She crushes inoffensive must, and meaths
From many a berry; and from sweet kernels pressed
She tempers dulcet creams; nor these to hold
Wants her fit vessels pure; then strews the ground
With rose, and odours from the shrub unfumed.
Meanwhile our primitive great sire, to meet
His godlike guest walks forth, without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete
Perfections: in himself was all his state,
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
Of horses led, and grooms besmeared with gold,
Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape.
Nearer his presence, Adam, though not awed,
Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,
As to a superior nature, bowing low,
Thus said: "Native of Heaven! for other place
"None can, than Heaven, such glorious shape contain;
"Since, by descending from the thrones above,
"Those happy places thou hast deigned awhile
"To want, and honour these; vouchsafe with us
"Two only, who yet by sovereign gift possess
"This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower
"To rest; and what the garden choicest bears
"To sit and taste, till this meridian heat
"Be over, and the sun more cool decline."
Whom thus the angelic Virtue answered mild:
"Adam! I therefore came; nor art thou such
"Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
"As may not oft invite, though spirits of Heaven,
"To visit thee: lead on then where thy bower

" O'ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
" I have at will." So to the sylvan lodge
They came, that like Pomona's arbour smiled,
With flowerets decked, and fragrant smells; but Eve,
Undecked save with herself, more lovely fair
Than Wood-nymph, or the fairest Goddess feigned
Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,
Stood to entertain her guest from Heaven; no veil
She needed, virtue proof; no thought infirm
Altered her cheek. On whom the angel "Hail!"
Bestowed; the holy salutation used
Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:
" Hail, mother of mankind! whose fruitful womb
" Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons,
" Than with these various fruits the trees of God
" Have heaped this table!"—Raised of grassy turf
Their table was, and mossy seats had round;
And on her ample square from side to side
All autumn piled; though spring and autumn here
Danced hand in hand. Awhile discourse they hold;
No fear lest dinner cool; when thus began
Our author: " Heavenly stranger! please to taste
" These bounties, which our Nourisher,—from whom
" All perfect good, unmeasured out, descends,—
" To us for food and for delight hath caused
" The earth to yield; unsavoury food, perhaps,
" To spiritual natures; only this I know,
" That one celestial Father gives to all."
To whom the angel: " Therefore what he gives
" (Whose praise be ever sung!) to Man, in part
" Spiritual, may of purest spirits be found
" No ingrateful food: and food alike those pure
" Intelligential substances require,
" As doth your rational; and both contain
" Within them every lower faculty
" Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
" Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,
" And corporeal to incorporeal turn.
" For know, whatever was created needs
" To be sustained and fed: of elements

" The grosser feeds the purer; earth the sea;
" Earth and the sea feed air; the air those fires
" Ethereal, and as lowest first the Moon;
" Whence, in her visage round, those spots, unpurged
" Vapours, not yet into her substance turned.
" Nor doth the Moon no nourishment exhale
" From her moist continent to higher orbs.
" The Sun, that light imparts to all, receives
" From all his alimental recompense
" In humid exhalations, and at even
" Sups with the Ocean. Though in Heaven the trees
" Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
" Yield nectar; though from off the boughs each morn
" We brush mellifluous dews, and find the ground
" Covered with pearly grain; yet God hath here
" Varied his bounty so with new delights,
" As may compare with Heaven; and to taste
" Think not I shall be nice." So down they sat,
And to their viands fell; nor seemingly
The angel, nor in mist,—the common gloss
Of theologians;—but with keen dispatch
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
To transubstantiate: what redounds, transpires
Through spirits with ease; nor wonder, if, by fire
Of sooty coal, the empiric alchemist
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,
As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve
Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquors crowned. O innocence
Deserving Paradise! if ever, then,—
Then had the sons of God excuse to have been
Enamoured at that sight; but in those hearts
Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy
Was understood, the injured lover's Hell.

Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,
Not burdened nature, sudden mind arose
In Adam, not to let the occasion pass,
Given him by this great conference, to know
Of things above his world, and of their being

Who dwell in Heaven, whose excellence he saw
Transcend his own so far; whose radiant forms—
Divine effulgence,—whose high power, so far
Exceeded human; and his wary speech
Thus to the empyreal minister he framed:
"Inhabitant with God! now know I well
"Thy favour, in this honour done to Man;
"Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsafed
"To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste;
"Food not of angels, yet accepted so,
"As that more willingly thou couldst not seem
"At Heaven's high feasts to have fed; yet what compare!"
To whom the wingèd Hierarch replied:
"O Adam! one Almighty is, from whom
"All things proceed, and up to him return,
"If not depraved from good, created all
"Such to perfection: one first matter all,
"Endued with various forms, various degrees
"Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
"But more refined, more spiritous, and pure,
"As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending
"Each in their several active spheres assigned,
"Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
"Proportioned to each kind. So, from the root
"Springs lighter the green stalk; from thence the leaves
"More airy; last, the bright consummate flower
"Spirits odórous breathes: flowers and their fruit,
"Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
"To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
"To intellectual; give both life and sense,
"Fancy and understanding: whence the soul
"Reason receives; and reason is her being,
"Discursive or intuitive: discourse
"Is oftest yours, the latter most is ours;
"Differing but in degree, of kind the same.
"Wonder not then, what God for you saw good
"If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
"To proper substance. Timè may come, when men
"With angels may participate, and find
"No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare:

" And from these corporal nutriments, perhaps,
" Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
" Improved by tract of time, and, winged, ascend
" Ethereal, as we; or may, at choice,
" Here, or in Heavenly Paradises dwell,
" If ye be found obedient, and retain,
" Unalterably firm, his love entire,
" Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile, enjoy
" Your fill what happiness this happy state
" Can comprehend, incapable of more."
To whom the patriarch of mankind replied:
" O favourable spirit, propitious guest!
" Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
" Our knowledge, and the scale of nature set
" From centre to circumference; whereon,
" In contemplation of created things,
" By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
" What meant that caution joined, 'If ye be found
" Obedient?' Can we want obedience then
" To him, or possibly his love desert,
" Who formed us from the dust, and placed us here
" Full, to the utmost measure, of what bliss
" Human desires can seek or apprehend?"
To whom the angel: " Son of Heaven and Earth!
" Attend. That thou art happy, owe to God;
" That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,
" That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.
" This was that caution given thee; be advised.
" God made thee perfect, not immutable;
" And good he made thee, but to persevere
" He left it in thy power; ordained thy will
" By nature free, not overruled by fate
" Inextricable, or strict necessity:
" Our voluntary service he requires,
" Not our necessitated; such with him
" Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
" Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve
" Willing or no, who will but what they must
" By destiny, and can no other choose?
" Myself, and all the angelic host, that stand

" In sight of God enthroned, our happy state
" Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;
" On other surety none: freely we serve,
" Because we freely love, as in our will
" To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
" And some are fallen—to disobedience fallen,
" And so from Heaven to deepest Hell! O fall
" From what high state of bliss, into what woe!"
To whom our great progenitor: " Thy words
" Attentive, and with more delighted ear,
" Divine instructor! I have heard, than when
" Cherubic songs by night from neighbouring hills
" Aërial music send. Nor knew I not
" To be, both will and deed, created free;
" Yet that we never shall forget to love
" Our Maker, and obey him whose command
" Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts
" Assured me, and still assure: though what thou tell'st
" Hath passed in Heaven, some doubt within me move;
" But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
" The full relation, which must needs be strange,
" Worthy of sacred silence to be heard;
" And we have yet large day; for scarce the Sun
" Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins
" His other half in the great zone of Heaven."
Thus Adam made request; and Raphael,
After short pause assenting, thus began:
" High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of men!
" Sad task and hard; for how shall I relate
" To human sense the invisible exploits
" Of warring spirits? how, without remorse,
" The ruin of so many, glorious once
" And perfect while they stood? how, last, unfold
" The secrets of another world, perhaps
" Not lawful to reveal?—Yet, for thy good,
" This is dispensed; and what surmounts the reach
" Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
" By likening spiritual to corporal forms,
" As may express them best; though what if Earth
" Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein

" Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought!
" As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild
" Reigned where these Heavens now roll, where Earth now rests
" Upon her centre poised; when, on a day,
" (For time, though in eternity, applied
" To motion, measures all things durable
" By present, past, and future,) on such day
" As Heaven's great year brings forth, the empyreal host
" Of angels, by imperial summons called,
" Innumerable before the Almighty's throne
" Forthwith, from all the ends of Heaven, appeared
" Under their hierarchs in orders bright:
" Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,
" Standards and gonfalons 'twixt van and rear
" Stream in the air, and for distinction serve
" Of hierarchies, of orders and degrees;
" Or in their glittering tissues bear emblazed
" Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
" Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs
" Of circuit inexpressible they stood,
" Orb within orb, the Father infinite,
" By whom, in bliss imbosomed, sat the Son,
" Amidst, as from a flaming mount, whose top
" Brightness had made invisible, thus spake:
" 'Hear, all ye angels, progeny of light,
" Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers!
" Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand:
" This day I have begot whom I declare
" My only Son, and on this holy hill
" Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
" At my right hand; your head I him appoint;
" And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow
" All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord.
" Under his great vicegerent reign abide
" United, as one individual soul,
" For ever happy: him who disobeys,
" Me disobeys; breaks union; and that day,
" Cast out from God, and blessed vision, falls
" Into utter darkness, deep ingulfed, his place
" Ordained without redemption, without end.'

" So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words
" All seemed well pleased;—all seemed, but were not all.
" That day, as other solemn days, they spent
" In song and dance about the sacred hill;
" Mystical dance! which yonder starry sphere
" Of planets, and of fixed, in all her wheels
" Resembles nearest; mazes intricate,
" Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
" Then most, when most irregular they seem;
" And, in their motions, harmony divine
" So smooths her charming tons, that God's own ear
" Listens delighted. Evening now approached;
" (For we have also our evening and our morn,—
" We ours for change delectable, not need;)
" Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn
" Desirous; all in circles as they stood,
" Tables are set, and on a sudden piled
" With angels' food; and rubied nectar flows
" In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,
" Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of Heaven.
" On flowers reposed, and with fresh flowerets crowned,
" They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
" Quaff immortality and joy, (secure
" Of surfeit, where full measure only bounds
" Excess,) before the all-bounteous King, who showered
" With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.
" Now when ambrosial night, with clouds exhaled
" From that high mount of God, whence light and shade
" Spring both, the face of brightest Heaven had changed
" To grateful twilight, (for night comes not there
" In darker veil,) and roseate dews disposed
" All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest
" Wide over all the plain, and wider far
" Than all this globous Earth in plain outspread,
" (Such are the courts of God!) the angelic throng,
" Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend
" By living streams among the trees of life,
" Pavilions numberless! and sudden reared,
" Celestial tabernacles where they slept
" Fanned with cool winds; save those, who, in their course,

" Melodious hymns about the sovran throne
" Alternate all night long. But not so waked
" Satan; (so call him now; his former name
" Is heard no more in Heaven;) he, of the first,
" If not the first archangel, great in power,
" In favour, and pre-eminence, yet fraught
" With envy against the Son of God,—that day
" Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed
" Messiah, King anointed,—could not bear
" Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired.
" Deep malice thence conceiving, and disdain,
" Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
" Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved
" With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
" Unworshipped, unobeyed, the throne supreme,—
" Contemptuous; and, his next subordinate
" Awakening, thus to him in secret spake:
" ' Sleep'st thou, companion dear? What sleep can close
" Thy eyelids? and remember'st what decree
" Of yesterday, so late, hath passed the lips
" Of Heaven's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts
" Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont, to impart:
" Both waking we were one; how then can now
" Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest imposed;
" New laws from him who reigns new minds may raise
" In us who serve—new counsels, to debate
" What doubtful may ensue: more in this place
" To utter is not safe. Assemble thou
" Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;
" Tell them, that by command, ere yet dim night
" Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,
" And all who under me their banners wave,
" Homeward, with flying march, where we possess
" The quarters of the north; there to prepare
" Fit entertainment to receive our King,
" The great Messiah, and his new commands;
" Who speedily through all the hierarchies
" Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.'
" So spake the false archangel, and infused
" Bad influence into the unwary breast

" Of his associate: he together calls,
" Or several one by one, the regent powers,
" Under him regent; tells, as he was taught,
" That the Most High commanding, now ere night,—
" Now ere dim night had disencumbered Heaven,
" The great hierarchal standard was to move;
" Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
" Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound
" Or taint integrity: but all obeyed
" The wonted signal, and superior voice
" Of their great potentate; for great indeed
" His name, and high was his degree in Heaven:
" His countenance, as the morning star that guides
" The starry flock, allured them; and with lies
" Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host!
" Meanwhile the Eternal Eye, whose sight discerns
" Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
" And from within the golden lamps that burn
" Nightly before him, saw without their light
" Rebellion rising—saw in whom—how spread
" Among the sons of morn—what multitudes
" Were banded to oppose his high decree;
" And, smiling, to his only Son thus said:
" 'Son! thou in whom my glory I behold
" In full resplendence, heir of all my might!
" Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
" Of our omnipotence; and with what arms
" We mean to hold what anciently we claim
" Of deity or empire: such a foe
" Is rising, who intends to erect his throne
" Equal to ours, throughout the spacious north;
" Nor so content, hath in his thought to try,
" In battle, what our power is, or our right.
" Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
" With speed what force is left, and all employ
" In our defence; lest unawares we lose
" This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.'
" To whom the Son, with calm aspect and clear,
" Lightning divine, ineffable, serene,
" Made answer: 'Mighty Father! thou thy foes

" Justly hast in derision, and, secure,
" Laugh'st at their vain designs, and tumults vain,
" Matter to me of glory! whom their hate
" Illustrates, when they see all regal power
" Given me to quell their pride; and in event
" Know whether I be dexterous to subdue
" Thy rebels, or be found the worst in Heaven.'
" So spake the Son: but Satan, with his powers,
" Far was advanced on winged speed; an host
" Innumerable as the stars of night,
" Or stars of morning—dew-drops, which the sun
" Impearls on every leaf and every flower.
" Regions they passed, the mighty regencies
" Of Seraphim, and Potentates, and Thrones,
" In their triple degrees; (regions to which
" All thy dominion, Adam, is no more
" Than what this garden is to all the earth,
" And all the sea, from one entire globose
" Stretched into longitude;) which having past,
" At length into the limits of the north
" They came; and Satan to his royal seat,
" High on a hill, far blazing, as a mount
" Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers
" From diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of gold;
" The palace of great Lucifer; (so call
" That structure in the dialect of men
" Interpreted,) which, not long after, he,
" Affecting all equality with God,
" In imitation of that mount whereon
" Messiah was declared in sight of Heaven,
" The Mountain of the Congregation called;
" For thither he assembled all his train,
" Pretending so commanded, to consult
" 'About the great reception of their King
" Thither to come; and with calumnious art
" Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears:
" 'Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers!
" If these magnific titles yet remain
" Not merely titular, since, by decree,
" Another now hath to himself engrossed

" All power, and us eclipsed, under the name
" Of King anointed; for whom all this haste
" Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,
" This only to consult, how we may best,
" With what may be devised of honours new,
" Receive him coming to receive from us
" Knee-tribute, yet unpaid—prostration vile!
" Too much to One! but, double, how endured,
" To One, and to his image now proclaimed!
" But what if better counsels might erect
" Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke?
" Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
" The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust
" To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
" Natives and sons of Heaven, possessed before
" By none; and if not equal all, yet free—
" Equally free; for orders and degrees
" Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
" Who can in reason then, or right, assume
" Monarchy over such as live by right
" His equals?—if in power and splendour less,
" In freedom equal:—or can introduce
" Law and edict on us, who without law
" Err not? much less, for this to be our Lord,
" And look for adoration; to the abuse
" Of those imperial titles, which assert
" Our being ordained to govern—not to serve!'
" Thus far his bold discourse, without control,
" Had audience; when, among the Seraphim,
" Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored
" The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,
" Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
" The current of his fury thus opposed:
" 'O argument blasphémous, false, and proud!
" Words which no ear ever to hear in Heaven
" Expected, least of all from thee, ingrate,
" In place thyself so high above thy peers!
" Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
" The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,
" That to his only Son, by right endued

" With regal sceptre, every soul in Heaven
" Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due
" Confess him rightful King? Unjust, thou say'st,
" Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
" And equal over equals to let reign,
" One over all with unsucceeded power.
" Shalt thou give law to God? shalt thou dispute
" With him the points of liberty, who made
" Thee what thou art, and formed the Powers of Heaven
" Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being?
" Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,
" And of our good, and of our dignity,
" How provident he is—how far from thought
" To make us less; bent rather to exalt
" Our happy state, under one head more near
" United. But, to grant it thee unjust,
" That equal over equals monarch reign:
" Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,
" Or all angelic nature joined in one,
" Equal to him, begotten Son? by whom,
" As by his word, the mighty Father made
" All things, even thee; and all the Spirits of Heaven
" By him created in their bright degrees;
" Crowned them with glory, and, to their glory, named
" Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
" Essential Powers; nor by his reign obscured,
" But more illustrious made; since he the head,
" One of our number thus reduced, becomes;
" His laws our laws; all honour to him done
" Returns our own. Cease then this impious rage,
" And tempt not these; but hasten to appease
" The incensed Father, and the incensed Son,
" While pardon may be found in time besought.'
" So spake the fervent angel; but his zeal
" None seconded, as out of season judged,
" Or singular, and rash: whereat rejoiced
" The Apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied:
" ' That we were formed then, say'st thou? and the work
" Of secondary hands, by task transferred
" From Father to his Son? strange point, and new!

" Doctrine which we would know whence learned: who saw
" When this creation was? Remember'st thou
" Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
" We know no time when we were not as now;
" Know none before us—self-begot—self-raised
" By our own quickening power, when fatal course
" Had circled his full orb; the birth mature
" Of this our native Heaven; ethereal sons.
" Our puissance is our own; our own right hand
" Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
" Who is our equal: then thou shalt behold
" Whether by supplication we intend
" Address, and to begirt the Almighty throne
" Beseeching, or besieging. This report,
" These tidings carry to the anointed King;
" And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.'
" He said; and, as the sound of waters deep,
" Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause
" Through the infinite host; nor less for that
" The flaming Seraph fearless, though alone,
" Encompassed round with foes, thus answered bold:
" 'O alienate from God, O spirit accursed,
" Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall
" Determined, and thy hapless crew involved
" In this perfidious fraud; contagion spread
" Both of thy crime and punishment. Henceforth
" No more be troubled how to quit the yoke
" Of God's Messiah; those indulgent laws
" Will not be now vouchsafed; other decrees
" Against thee are gone forth without recall:
" That golden sceptre, which thou didst reject,
" Is now an iron rod, to bruise and break
" Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise:
" Yet not for thy advice, or threats, I fly
" These wicked tents devoted; lest the wrath
" Impendent, raging into sudden flame,
" Distinguish not: for soon expect to feel
" His thunder on thy head, devouring fire!
" Then, who created thee, lamenting, learn,
" When, who can uncreate thee, thou shalt know.'

"So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found
"Among the faithless—faithful only he
"Among innumerable false; unmoved,
"Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
"His loyalty he kept—his love—his zeal:
"Nor number nor example with him wrought
"To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
"Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,
"Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
"Superior, nor of violence feared aught;
"And, with retorted scorn, his back he turned
"On those proud towers to swift destruction doomed."

Sixth Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

RAPHAEL continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his Angels. The first fight described: Satan and his powers retire under night: he calls a council; invents devilish engines, which, in the second day's fight, put Michael and his Angels to some disorder; but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelmed both the force and machines of Satan; yet the tumult not so ending, God, on the third day, sends Messiah, his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory. He, in the power of his Father, coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side, with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them, unable to resist, towards the wall of Heaven; which opening, they leap down, with horror and confusion, into the place of punishment prepared for them in the deep. Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.

" ALL night the dreadless angel, unpursued,
" Through Heaven's wide champain held his way; till Morn,
" Waked by the circling Hours, with rosy hand
" Unbarred the gates of light. There is a cave
" Within the mount of God, fast by his throne,
" Where light and darkness, in perpetual round,
" Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heaven
" Grateful vicissitude, like day and night:
" Light issues forth, and at the other dbor
" Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour
" To veil the Heaven; though darkness there might well
" Seem twilight here: and now went forth the Morn,
" Such as in highest Heaven, arrayed in gold
" Empyreal: from before her vanished Night,
" Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain,
" Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,

" Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,
" Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view:
" War he perceived—war in procinct: and found
" Already known what he, for news, had thought
" To have reported: gladly then he mixed
" Among those friendly Powers, who him received
" With joy and acclamations loud, that one—
" That of so many myriads fallen, yet one
" Returned not lost. On to the sacred hill
" They led him high applauded, and present
" Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice,
" From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:
" ' Servant of God, well done! well hast thou fought
" The better fight, who single hast maintained
" Against revolted multitudes the cause
" Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms;
" And for the testimony of truth hast borne
" Universal reproach, far worse to bear
" Than violence; for this was all thy care,
" To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
" Judged thee perverse: the easier conquest now
" Remains thee, aided by this host of friends,
" Back on thy foes more glorious to return,
" Than scorned thou didst depart; and to subdue
" By force, who reason for their law refuse,—
" Right reason for their law, and for their King
" Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.
" ' Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince!
" And thou, in military prowess next,
" Gabriel! Lead forth to battle these my sons
" Invincible; lead forth my armed Saints,
" By thousands and by millions, ranged for fight,
" Equal in number to that godless crew
" Rebellious: them with fire and hostile arms
" Fearless assault; and, to the brow of Heaven
" Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss,
" Into their place of punishment,—the gulf
" Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide
" His fiery chaos to receive their fall.'
" So spake the Sovran Voice, and clouds began

" To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll,
" In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames, the sign
" Of wrath awaked! Nor with less dread the loud
" Ethereal trumpet from on high 'gan blow:
" At which command the Powers militant
" That stood for Heaven, in mighty quadrate joined
" Of union irresistible, moved on
" In silence their bright legions, to the sound
" Of instrumental harmony, that breathed
" Heroic ardour to adventurous deeds,
" Under their godlike leaders, in the cause
" Of God and his Messiah. On they move
" Indissolubly firm; nor obvious hill,
" Nor straitening vale, nor wood nor stream, divides
" Their perfect ranks; for high above the ground
" Their march was, and the passive air upbore
" Their nimble tread. As when the total kind
" Of birds, in orderly array on wing,
" Came summoned over Eden to receive
" Their names of thee! so over many a tract
" Of Heaven they marched; and many a province wide,
" Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last,
" Far in the horizon to the north appeared
" From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched
" In battailous aspect, and—nearer view—
" Bristled with upright beams innumerable
" Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields
" Various, with boastful argument portrayed,
" The banded powers of Satan hasting on
" With furious expedition; for they weened
" That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,
" To win the mount of God, and on his throne
" To set the envier of his state, the proud
" Aspirer: but their thoughts proved fond and vain
" In the mid way. Though strange to us it seemed
" At first, that Angel should with Angel war,
" And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
" So oft in festivals of joy, and love
" Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire,
" Hymning the Eternal Father: but the shout

" Of battle now began, and rushing sound
" Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
" High in the midst, exalted as a God,
" The apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat,
" Idol of majesty divine! inclosed
" With flaming Cherubim and golden shields;
" Then lighted from his gorgeous throne, for now
" 'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,—
" A dreadful interval!—and front to front
" Presented stood in terrible array
" Of hideous length: before the cloudy van,
" On the rough edge of battle ere it joined,
" Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,
" Came towering, armed in adamant and gold.
" Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood
" Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds;
" And thus his own undaunted heart explores:
" 'O Heaven! that such resemblance of the Highest
" Should yet remain, where faith and reälty
" Remain not: wherefore should not strength and might
" There fail where virtue fails; or weakest prove
" Where boldest, though to sight unconquerable?
" His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid,
" I mean to try, whose reason I have tried
" Unsound and false: nor is it aught but just,
" That he, who in debate of truth hath won,
" Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
" Victor; though brutish that contést and foul,
" When reason hath to deal with force; yet so
" Most réason is that reason overcome.'
" So pondering, and from his armèd peers
" Forth stepping opposite, half-way he met
" His daring foe, at this prevention more
" Incensed, and thus securely him defied:
" 'Proud! art thou met? Thy hope was to have reached
" The height of thy aspiring unopposed;
" The throne of God unguarded, and his side
" Abandoned, at the terror of thy power,
" Or potent tongue: fool! not to think how vain
" Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms;

" Who, out of smallest things could, without end,
" Have raised incessant armies to defeat
" Thy folly; or, with solitary hand
" Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow,
" Unaided, could have finished thee, and whelmed
" Thy legions under darkness: but thou seest
" All are not of thy train; there be, who faith
" Prefer, and piety to God, though then
" To thee not visible, when I alone
" Seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent
" From all: my sect thou seest; now learn too late
" How few sometimes may know, when thousands err.'
" Whom the grand foe, with scornful eye askance,
" Thus answered: 'Ill for thee! but in wished hour
" Of my revenge, first sought for, thou returnest
" From flight, seditious angel! to receive
" Thy merited reward, the first assay
" Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue
" Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose
" A third part of the gods, in synod met
" Their deities to assert; who, while they feel
" Vigour divine within them, can allow
" Omnipotence to none. But well thou comest
" Before thy fellows, ambitious to win
" From me some plume, that thy success may show
" Destruction to the rest: this pause between,
" (Unanswered lest thou boast,) to let thee know,
" At first I thought that liberty and Heaven
" To heavenly souls had been all one; but now
" I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
" Ministering spirits, trained up in feast and song!
" Such hast thou armed—the minstrelsy of Heaven—
" Servility with freedom to contend,
" As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.'
" To whom in brief thus Abdiel stern replied:
" 'Apostate! still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
" Of erring, from the path of truth remote:
" Unjustly thou depravest it with the name
" Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
" Or Nature: God and Nature bid the same,

" When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
" Them whom he governs. This is servitude,
" To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled
" Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
" Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled ;
" Yet lewdly darest our ministering upbraid.
" Reign thou in Hell—thy kingdom ; let me serve
" In Heaven God ever blest, and his divine
" Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed !
" Yet chains in Hell, not realms, expect : meanwhile,
" From me returned, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
" This greeting on thy impious crest receive.'
" So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
" Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
" On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,
" Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,
" Such ruin intercept ; ten paces huge
" He back recoiled ; the tenth on bended knee
" His massy spear upstaid ; as if on earth,
" Winds under ground, or waters, forcing way,
" Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
" Half sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
" The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see
" Thus foiled their mightiest ; ours joy filled, and shout,
" Presage of victory, and fierce desire
" Of battle : whereat Michaël bid sound
" The archangel trumpet ; through the vast of Heaven
" It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
" Hosanna to the Highest : nor stood at gaze
" The adverse legions, nor less hideous joined
" The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
" And clamour, such as heard in Heaven till now
" Was never ; arms on armour clashing brayed.
" Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
" Of brazen chariots raged : dire was the noise
" Of conflict ; over head the dismal hiss
" Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
" And, flying, vaulted either host with fire :
" So under fiery cope together rushed
" Both battles main, with ruinous assault

" And inextinguishable rage. All Heaven
" Resounded; and had Earth been then, all Earth
" Had to her centre shook. What wonder? when
" Millions of fierce encountering angels fought
" On either side, the least of whom could wield
" These elements, and arm him with the force
" Of all their regions: how much more of power
" Army against army numberless to raise
" Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb,
" Though not destroy, their happy native seat!
" Had not the Eternal King Omnipotent,
" From his strong hold of Heaven, high overruled
" And limited their might; though numbered such,
" As each divided legion might have seemed
" A numerous host; in strength each armèd hand
" A legion; led in fight, yet leader seemed
" Each warrior single, as in chief, expert
" When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
" Of battle, open when, and when to close
" The ridges of grim war: no thought of flight—
" None of retreat—no unbecoming deed
" That argued fear; each on himself relied,
" As only in his arm the moment lay
" Of victory. Deeds of eternal fame
" Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread
" That war and various; sometimes on firm ground
" A standing fight; then, soaring on main wing,
" Tormented all the air; all air seemed then
" Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale
" The battle hung; till Satan, who that day
" Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms
" No equal, ranging through the dire attack
" Of fighting Seraphim confused, at length
" Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and felled
" Squadrons at once; with huge two-handed sway
" Brandished aloft, the horrid edge came down
" Wide-wasting! Such destruction to withstand
" He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb
" Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,—
" A vast circumference. At his approach,

" The great archangel from his warlike toil
" Surceased; and, glad, as hoping here to end
" Intestine war in Heaven, the arch-foe subdued
" Or captive dragged in chains, with hostile frown
" And visage all inflamed, first thus began:
" 'Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt,
" Unnamed in Heaven; now plenteous, as thou seest
" These acts of hateful strife, hateful to all,
" Though heaviest, by just measure on thyself
" And thy adherents: how hast thou disturbed
" Heaven's blessed peace, and into nature brought
" Misery, uncreated till the crime
" Of thy rebellion! how hast thou instilled
" Thy malice into thousands, once upright
" And faithful—now proved false! But think not here
" To trouble holy rest; Heaven casts thee out
" From all her confines; Heaven, the seat of bliss,
" Brooks not the works of violence and war.
" Hence, then! and evil go with thee along,
" Thy offspring, to the place of evil, Hell;
" Thou and thy wicked crew! there mingle broils,
" Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom;
" Or some more sudden vengeance, winged from God,
" Precipitate thee with augmented pain.'
" So spake the prince of angels; to whom thus
" The adversary: 'Nor think thou with wind
" Of airy threats to awe, whom yet with deeds
" Thou canst not. Has thou turned the least of these
" To flight; or if to fall, but that they rise
" Unvanquished; easier to transact with me
" That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats
" To chase me hence? Err not, that so shall end
" The strife which thou callst evil, but we style
" The strife of glory; which we mean to win,
" Or turn this Heaven itself into the Hell
" Thou fablest; here, however, to dwell free,
" If not to reign: meanwhile thy utmost force
" (And join him named Almighty to thy aid)
" I fly not; but have sought thee far and nigh.'
" They ended parle, and both addressed for fight

" Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
" Of angels, can relate, or to what things
" Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift
" Human imagination to such height
" Of godlike power? for likest Gods they seemed,
" Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,--
" Fit to decide the empire of great Heaven.
" Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air
" Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields
" Blazed opposite, while expectation stood
" In horror: from each hand with speed retired,
" Where erst was thickest fight, the angelic throng,
" And left large field, unsafe within the wind
" Of such commotion; such as (to set forth
" Great things by small), if, nature's concord broke,
" Among the constellations war were sprung,
" Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
" Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
" Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.
" Together both, with next to almighty arm
" Uplifted imminent, one stroke they aimed
" That might determine, and not need repeat
" As not of power at once; nor odds appeared
" In might or swift prevention: but the sword
" Of Michael from the armoury of God
" Was given him tempered so, that neither keen,
" Nor solid, might resist that edge: it met
" The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
" Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor staid,
" But with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shared
" All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain,
" And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore
" The griding sword with discontinuous wound
" Passed through him; but the ethereal substance closed,
" Not long divisible; and from the gash
" A stream of nectarous humour issuing flowed
" Sanguine, such as celestial spirits may bleed,
" And all his armour stained, erewhile so bright.
" Forthwith on all sides to his aid was run
" By angels many and strong, who interposed

GABRIEL BATTLING WITH A GIANT

[a] By angel

MICHAEL AND GABRIEL BATTLING WITH SATAN AND HIS ANGELS.

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" Defence; while others bore him on their shields
" Back to his chariot, where it stood retired
" From off the files of war: there they him laid
" Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame.
" To find himself not matchless, and his pride
" Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath
" His confidence to equal God in power.
" Yet soon he healed; for Spirits that live throughout
" Vital in every part, (not as frail man
" In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,)
" Cannot, but by annihilating, die;
" Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
" Receive, no more than can the fluid air:
" All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,
" All intellect, all sense; and, as they please,
" They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size
" Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.
" Meanwhile in other parts like deeds deserved
" Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,
" And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array
" Of Moloch, furious king; who him defied,
" And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound
" Threatened, nor from the Holy One of Heaven
" Refrained his tongue blasphémous; but anon,
" Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms
" And uncouth pain, fled bellowing. On each wing,
" Uriel, and Raphaël, his vaunting foe,
" Though huge and in a rock of diamond armed,
" Vanquished,—Adramelech and Asmodai,
" Two potent Thrones, that to be less than Gods
" Disdained, but meaner thoughts learned in their flight,
" Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail.
" Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
" The atheist crew; but with redoubled blow
" Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence
" Of Ramiel scorched and blasted, overthrew.
" I might relate of thousands, and their names
" Etérnize here on Earth; but those elect
" Angels, contented with their fame in Heaven,
" Seek not the praise of men; the other sort,

" In might though wondrous and in acts of war,
" Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
" Cancelled from Heaven and sacred memory,
" Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell;
" For strength, from truth divided and from just,
" Illaudable, naught merits but dispraise
" And ignominy; yet to glory aspires
" Vainglorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
" Therefore eternal silence be their doom.
" And now, their mightiest quelled, the battle swerved,
" With many an inroad gored: deformèd rout
" Entered, and foul disorder; all the ground
" With shivered armour strown; and on a heap
" Chariot and charioteer lay overturned,
" And fiery-foaming steeds; what stood, recoiled
" O'erwearied, through the faint Satanic host,
" Defensive scarce; or with pale fear surprised,
" (Then first with fear surprised, and sense of pain,)
" Fled ignominious—to such evil brought
" By sin of disobedience; till that hour
" Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.
" Far otherwise the inviolable Saints,
" In cubic phalanx firm, advanced entire,
" Invulnerable—impenetrably armed;
" Such high advantages their innocence
" Gave them above their foes—not to have sinned,
" Not to have disobeyed—in fight they stood
" Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained
" By wound, though from their place by violence moved.
" Now Night her course began, and, over Heaven
" Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed,
" And silence, on the odious din of war:
" Under her cloudy covert both retired,
" Victor and vanquished. On the foughten field
" Michaël and his angels prevalent
" Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,
" Cherubic waving fires: on the other part,
" Satan, with his rebellious, disappeared,
" Far in the dark dislodged; and, void of rest
" His Potentates to council called by night;

" And, in the midst thus undismayed began :
" ' O now in danger tried, now known in arms
" Not to be overpowered, companions dear !
" Found worthy not of liberty alone,
" Too mean pretence ! but, what we more affect,
" Honour, dominion, glory, and renown ;
" Who have sustained one day in doubtful fight,
" (And if one day, why not eternal days ?)
" What Heaven's Lord had powerfulest to send
" Against us from about his throne, and judged
" Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
" But proves not so : then fallible, it seems,
" Of future we may deem him, though till now
" Omniscient thought. True is, less firmly armed,
" Some disadvantage we endured, and pain
" Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemned ;
" Since now we find this our empyreal form
" Incapable of mortal injury,
" Imperishable ; and, though pierced with wound,
" Soon closing, and by native vigour healed
" Of evil then so small, as easy think
" The remedy ; perhaps more valid arms,
" Weapons more violent, when next we meet,
" May serve to better us, and worse our foes ;
" Or equal what between us made the odds,
" In nature none : if other hidden cause
" Left them superior, while we can preserve
" Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,
" Due search and consultation will disclose.'
" He sat ; and in the assembly next upstood
" Nisroch, of Principalities the prime :
" As one he stood escaped from cruel fight,
" Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn ;
" And, cloudy in aspect, thus answering spake :
" ' Deliverer from new lords ! leader to free
" Enjoyment of our right as Gods ! yet hard
" For Gods, and too unequal work we find,
" Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
" Against unpained, impassive ; from which evil
" Ruin must needs ensue ; for what avails

" Valour or strength, though matchless, quelled with pain
" Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
" Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well
" Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine,
" But live content, which is the calmest life:
" But pain is perfect misery, the worst
" Of evils: and excessive, overturns
" All patience. He who therefore can invent
" With what more forcible we may offend
" Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm
" Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves
" No less than for deliverance what we owe.'
" Whereto, with look composed, Satan replied:
" 'Not univented that, which thou aright
" Believest so main to our success, I bring.
" Which of us, who beholds the bright surface
" Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand—
" This continent of spacious Heaven, adorned
" With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems, and gold;
" Whose eye so superficially surveys
" These things, as not to mind from whence they grow
" Deep under ground; materials dark and crude,
" Of spirituous and fiery spume, till touched
" With Heaven's ray, and tempered, they shoot forth
" So beauteous, opening to the ambient light?
" These, in their dark nativity, the deep
" Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame;
" Which, into hollow engines, long and round,
" Thick-rammed, at the other bore with touch of fire
" Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
" From far, with thundering noise, among our foes
" Such implements of mischief, as shall dash
" To pieces, and o'erwhelm, whatever stands
" Adverse; that they shall fear we have disarmed
" The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.
" Nor long shall be our labour; yet, ere dawn,
" Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive;
" Abandon fear—to strength and counsel joined
" Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.'
" He ended; and his words their drooping cheer

" Enlightened, and their languished hope revived.
" The invention all admired, and each, how he
" To be the inventor missed; so easy it seemed
" Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought
" Impossible: yet, haply, of thy race
" In future days, if malice should abound,
" Some one intent on mischief, or inspired
" With devilish machination, might devise
" Like instrument to plague the sons of men
" For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
" Forthwith from council to the work they flew:
" None arguing stood: innumerable hands
" Were ready: in a moment up they turned
" Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath
" The originals of nature in their crude
" Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam
" They found—they mingled; and, with subtle art
" Concocted and adusted, they reduced
" To blackest grain, and into store conveyed.
" Part hidden veins digged up (nor hath this earth
" Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,
" Whereof to found their engines, and their balls
" Of missive ruin: part incentive reed
" Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire.
" So all, ere dayspring, under conscious night,
" Secret they finished, and in order set,
" With silent circumspection, unespied.
" Now when fair Morn orient in Heaven appeared,
" Up rose the victor-angels, and to arms
" The matin trumpet sung: in arms they stood
" Of golden panoply, refulgent host!
" Soon banded: others from the dawning hills
" Looked round, and scouts each coast light-armèd scour,—
" Each quarter—to descry the distant foe,
" Where lodged, or whither fled; or if for fight,
" In motion or in halt: him soon they met
" Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow
" But firm battalion. Back with speediest sail,
" Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,
" Came flying, and in mid air aloud thus cried:

" ' Arm, warriors—arm for fight! the foe at hand,
" Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit
" This day: fear not his flight; so thick a cloud
" He comes, and settled in his face I see
" Sad resolution, and secure. Let each
" His adamantine coat gird well, and each
" Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orbèd shield,
" Borne even, on high; for this day will pour down,
" If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,
" But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.'
" So warned he them, aware themselves; and soon
" In order, quit of all impediment,
" Instant without disturb they took alarm,
" And onward moved embattled; when, behold!
" Not distant far with heavy pace the foe
" Approaching gross and huge; in hollow cube
" Training his devilish enginery, impaled
" On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,
" To hide the fraud. At interview both stood
" Awhile; but suddenly at head appeared
" Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:
" ' Vanguard! to right and left the front unfold;
" That all may see, who hate us, how we seek
" Peace and composure, and, with open breast,
" Stand ready to receive them, if they like
" Our overture, and turn not back perverse;
" But that I doubt: however, witness Heaven;
" Heaven, witness thou anon, while we discharge
" Freely our part! Ye, who appointed stand,
" Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch
" What we propound, and loud that all may hear.'
" So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce
" Had ended; when to right and left the front
" Divided, and to either flank retired:
" Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,
" A triple mounted row of pillars laid
" On wheels; for like to pillars most they seemed,
" (Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir,
" With branches lopt, in wood or mountain felled;
" Brass, iron, stony mould,) had not their mouths

" With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,
" Portending hollow truce: at each behind
" A seraph stood, and in his hand a reed
" Stood waving tipt with fire; while we, suspense,
" Collected stood within our thoughts amused;
" Not long; for sudden all, at once, their reeds
" Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied
" With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
" But soon obscured with smoke, all heaven appeared,
" From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar
" Embowelled with outrageous noise the air,
" And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
" Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts, and hail
" Of iron globes; which, on the victor host
" Levelled, with such impetuous fury smote,
" That, whom they hit, none on their feet might stand,
" Though standing else as rocks; but down they fell
" By thousands,—angel on archangel rolled—
" The sooner for their arms: unarmed, they might
" Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift
" By quick contraction, or remove; but now
" Foul dissipation followed, and forced rout;
" Nor served it to relax their serried files.
" What should they do? If on they rushed, repulse
" Repeated, and indecent overthrow
" Doubled, would render them yet more despised,
" And to their foes a laughter; for, in view
" Stood ranked of Seraphim another row,
" In posture to displode their second tire
" Of thunder: back defeated to return
" They worse abhorred. Satan beheld their plight,
" And to his mates thus in derision called:
" " O friends! why come not on these victors proud?
" Erewhile they fierce were coming; and when we,
" To entertain them fair with open front
" And breast, (what could we more?) propounded terms
" Of composition, straight they changed their minds,
" Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
" As they would dance; yet for a dance they seemed
" Somewhat extravagant and wild—perhaps

" For joy of offered peace: but I suppose,
" If our proposals once again were heard,
" We should compel them to a quick result.'
" To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood:
" 'Leader! the terms we sent were terms of weight,
" Of hard contents, and full of force urged home;
" Such as, we might perceive, amused them all,
" And stumbled many: who receives them right,
" Had need from head to foot well understand;
" Not understood (this gift they had besides),
" They show us when our foes walk not upright.'
" So they among themselves in pleasant vein
" Stood scoffing, heightened in their thoughts beyond
" All doubt of victory; Eternal Might
" To match with their inventions they presumed
" So easy! and of his thunder made a scorn,
" And all his host derided, while they stood
" Awhile in trouble: but they stood not long;
" Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms
" Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.
" Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,
" Which God hath in his mighty angels placed!)
" Their arms away they threw, and to the hills,
" (For Earth hath this variety from Heaven
" Of pleasure situate in hill and dale,)
" Light as the lightning glimpse, they ran—they flew;
" From their foundations loosening to and fro,
" They plucked the seated hills, with all their load—
" Rocks, waters, woods; and, by the shaggy tops
" Uplifting, bore them in their hands. Amaze,
" Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,
" When, coming towards them, so dread they saw
" The bottom of the mountains upward turned;
" Till on those cursed engines' triple row
" They saw them whelmed, and all their confidence
" Under the weight of mountains buried deep—
" Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
" Main promontories flung, which in the air
" Came shadowing, and oppressed whole legions armed.
" Their armour helped their harm, crushed in and bruised

" Into their substance pent which wrought them pain
" Implacable, and many a dolorous groan,
" Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind
" Out of such prison, though spirits of purest light--
" Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.
" The rest, in imitation, to like arms
" Betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore;
" So hills amid the air encountered hills,
" Hurled to and fro with jaculation dire,
" That under ground they fought in dismal shade;
" Infernal noise! war seemed a civil game
" To this uproar; horrid confusion heaped
" Upon confusion rose: and now all Heaven
" Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread,
" Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits
" Shrined in his sanctuary of Heaven secure,
" Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
" This tumult, and permitted all, advised;
" That his great purpose he might so fulfil,
" To honour his anointed Son, avenged
" Upon his enemies, and to declare
" All power on him transferred: whence to his Son,
" The Assessor of his throne, he thus began:
" 'Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved!
" Son, in whose face invisible is beheld
" Visibly—what by Deity I am;
" And in whose hand what by decree I do;
" Second Omnipotence! two days are past
" (Two days, as we compute the days of Heaven)
" Since Michael, and his Powers, went forth to tame
" These disobedient: sore hath been their fight,
" As likeliest was, when two such foes met armed;
" For to themselves I left them; and, thou know'st,
" Equal in their creation they were formed,
" Save what sin hath impaired; which yet hath wrought
" Insensibly, for I suspend their doom:
" Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
" Endless, and no solution will be found.
" War wearied hath performed what war can do,
" And to disordered rage let loose the reins,

" With mountains, as with weapons, armed: which makes
" Wild work in Heaven, and dangerous to the main.
" Two days are therefore past, the third is thine:
" For thee I have ordained it; and thus far
" Have suffered, that the glory may be thine
" Of ending this great war, since none but thou
" Can end it. Into thee such virtue, and grace
" Immense I have transfused, that all may know
" In Heaven and Hell thy power above compare;
" And, this perverse commotion governed thus,
" To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir—
" Of all things to be Heir—and to be King
" By sacred unction, thy deserved right.
" Go then, thou Mightiest! in thy Father's might;
" Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels
" That shake Heaven's basis, bring forth all my war,
" My bow, and thunder—my almighty arms
" Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;
" Pursue these sons of darkness; drive them out
" From all Heaven's bounds into the utter deep:
" There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
" God, and Messiah his anointed King.'
" He said; and on his Son with rays direct
" Shone full: he all his Father full expressed
" Ineffably into his face received;
" And thus the filial Godhead answering spake:
" 'O Father! O Supreme of heavenly thrones!
" First, Highest, Holiest, Best! Thou always seek'st
" To glorify thy Son, I always thee,
" As is most just: this I my glory account,
" My exaltation, and my whole delight,
" That thou in me, well pleased, declarest thy will
" Fulfilled, which to fulfil is all my bliss.
" Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume;
" And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
" Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee
" For ever; and in me all whom thou lovest:
" But whom thou hatest, I hate; and can put on
" Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on—
" Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,

" Armed with thy might, rid Heaven of these rebelled,
" To their prepared ill mansion driven down,
" To chains of darkness, and the undying worm;
" That from thy just obedience could revolt,
" Whom to obey is happiness entire.
" Then shall thy saints unmixed, and from the impure
" Far separate, circling thy holy mount,
" Unfeignèd halleluiahs to thee sing,
" Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.'
" So said, he, o'er his sceptre bowing, rose
" From the right hand of Glory where he sat;
" And the third sacred morn began to shine,
" Dawning thro' Heaven: forth rushed with whirlwind sound
" The chariot of paternal Deity,
" Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
" Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed
" By four cherubic shapes; four faces each,
" Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all,
" And wings, were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels
" Of beryl, and careering fires between:
" Over their heads a crystal firmament,
" Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
" Amber, and colours of the showery arch.
" He, in celestial panoply all armed
" Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,
" Ascended: at his right hand Victory
" Sat eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow
" And quiver with three bolted thunder stored;
" And from about him fierce effusion rolled
" Of smoke, and bickering flame, and sparkles dire.
" Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,
" He onward came; far off his coming shone!
" And twenty thousand (I their number heard),
" Chariots of God, half on each hand were seen.
" He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime
" On the crystálline sky, in sapphire throned,
" Illustrious far and wide; but by his own
" First seen: them unexpected joy surprised,
" When the great ensign of Messiah blazed
" Aloft, by angels borne—his sign in heaven;

" Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced
" His army, circumfused on either wing,
" Under their head embodied all in one.
" Before him Power Divine his way prepared;
" At his command the uprooted hills retired
" Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went
" Obsequious; Heaven his wonted face renewed,
" And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.
" This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdúred,
" And to rebellious fight rallied their powers,
" Insensate hope conceiving from despair:
" In heavenly spirits could such perverseness dwell?—
" But to convince the proud what signs avail,
" Or wonders move the obdúrate to relent?
" They, hardened more by what might most reclaim,
" Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
" Took envy; and, aspiring to his height,
" Stood re-embattled fierce, by force, or fraud
" Weening to prosper, and at length prevail
" Against God and Messiah, or to fall
" In universal ruin last; and now
" To final battle drew, disdaining flight,
" Or faint retreat; when the great Son of God
" To all his host on either hand thus spake:
" 'Stand still, in bright array, ye Saints! here stand,
" Ye angels armed! this day from battle rest:
" Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
" Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause;
" And as ye have received, so have ye done
" Invincibly: but of this cursed crew
" The punishment to other hand belongs:
" Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints.
" Number to this day's work is not ordained,
" Nor multitude: stand only, and behold
" God's indignation on these godless poured
" By me: not you, but me, they have despised,
" Yet envied; against me is all their rage,
" Because the Father, to whom in Heaven supreme
" Kingdom, and power, and glory appertains,
" Hath honoured me according to his will.

" Therefore to me their doom he hath assigned;
" That they may have their wish, to try with me
" In battle which the stronger proves—they all,
" Or I alone against them; since by strength
" They measure all, of other excellence
" Not emulous, nor care who them excels:
" Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.'
" So spake the Son; and into terror changed
" His countenance, too severe to be beheld,
" And full of wrath bent on his enemies.
" At once the Four spread out their starry wings
" With dreadful shade contiguous; and the orbs
" Of his fierce chariot rolled, as with the sound
" Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host.
" He on his impious foes right onward drove,
" Gloomy as night: under his burning wheels
" The steadfast empyréan shook throughout,
" All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
" Among them he arrived, in his right hand
" Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
" Before him, such as in their souls infixed
" Plagues: they, astonished, all resistance lost—
" All courage: down their idle weapons dropt:
" O'er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode
" Of thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate;
" That wished the mountains now might be again
" Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.
" Nor less, on either side, tempestuous fell
" His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged Four,
" Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels
" Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;
" One spirit in them ruled; and every eye
" Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
" Among the accursed, that withered all their strength,
" And of their wonted vigour left them drained—
" Exhausted—spiritless—afflicted—fallen!
" Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked
" His thunder in mid volley; for he meant
" Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven:
" The overthrown he raised; and as a herd

" Of goats, or timorous flock together thronged,
" Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursued
" With terrors and with furies, to the bounds
" And crystal wall of Heaven; which, opening wide,
" Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
" Into the wastful deep: the monstrous sight
" Struck them with horror backward; but far worse
" Urged them behind: headlong themselves they threw
" Down from the verge of Heaven: eternal wrath
" Burned after them to the bottomless pit.
" Hell heard the insufferable noise: Hell saw
" Heaven ruining from Heaven, and would have fled
" Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep
" Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
" Nine days they fell: confounded Chaos roared,
" And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
" Through his wild anarchy; so huge a rout
" Encumbered him with ruin: Hell at last
" Yawning received them whole, and on them closed;—
" Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
" Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
" Disburdened Heaven rejoiced, and soon repaired
" Her mural breach, returning whence it rolled.
" Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes,
" Messiah his triumphal chariot turned:
" To meet him all his saints, who silent stood
" Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
" With jubilee advanced; and, as they went,
" Shaded with branching palm, each order bright,
" Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
" Son, Heir, and Lord! to him dominion given,
" Worthiest to reign. He, celebrated, rode
" Triumphant through mid Heaven, into the courts
" And temple of his mighty Father throned
" On high! who into glory him received,
" Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.
" Thus, measuring things in Heaven by things on Earth,
" At thy request, and that thou mayest beware
" By what is past, to thee I have revealed
" What might have else to human race been hid;

" The discord which befell, and war in Heaven
" Among the angelic Powers, and the deep fall
" Of those too high aspiring, who rebelled
" With Satan :—he who envies now thy state,
" Who now is plotting how he may seduce
" Thee also from obedience, that, with him
" Bereaved of happiness, thou mayest partake
" His punishment—eternal misery ;
" Which would be all his solace and revenge,
" As a despite done against the Most High,
" Thee once to gain companion of his woe.
" But listen not to his temptations : warn
" Thy weaker : let it profit thee to have heard,
" By terrible example, the reward
" Of disobedience : firm they might have stood,
" Yet fell. Remember ! and fear to transgress."

Seventh Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

RAPHAEL, at the request of Adam, relates how and wherefore this world was first created; that God, after the expelling of Satan and his angels out of Heaven, declared his pleasure to create another world, and other creatures to dwell therein; sends his Son with glory, and attendance of angels, to perform the work of creation in six days; the angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and his reascension into Heaven.

DESCEND from Heaven, Urania! by that name
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegaséan wing.
The meaning, not the name, I call: for thou,
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st; but, heavenly-born,
Before the hills appeared, or fountain flowed
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse—
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
With thy celestial song. Up-led by thee,
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering: with like safety guided down,
Return me to my native element;
Lest, from this flying steed unreined, (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime,)
Dismounted, on the Aleïan field I fall,
Erroneous there to wander, and forlorn.
Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
Within the visible diurnal sphere:

Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days;
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude! yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn
Purples the East: still govern thou my song,
Urania! and fit audience find, though few:
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers—the race
Of that vile rout that tore the Thracian bard
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou, who thee implores!
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.
Say, Goddess, what ensued, when Raphaël,
The affable archangel, had forewarned
Adam, by dire example, to beware
Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven
To these apostates; lest the like befall
In Paradise to Adam, or his race,
Charged not to touch the interdicted tree,
If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
So easily obeyed amid the choice
Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
Though wandering.

He, with his consorted Eve,
The story heard attentive, and was filled
With admiration, and deep muse, to hear
Of things so high and strange—things, to their thought
So unimaginable, as hate in Heaven,
And war so near the peace of God in bliss,
With such confusion: but the evil, soon
Driven back, redounded as a flood on those
From whom it sprung; impossible to mix
With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repealed
The doubts that in his heart arose; and now
Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know

What nearer might concern him—how this world
Of Heaven and Earth conspicuous first began—
When, and whereof created—for what cause—
What within Eden, or without, was done
Before his memory—as one, whose drouth
Yet scarce allayed, still eyes the current stream,
Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,
Proceeded thus to ask his heavenly guest:
" Great things and full of wonder in our ears,
" Far differing from this world thou hast revealed,
" Divine interpreter! by favour sent
" Down from the empyréan, to forewarn
" Us, timely, of what might else have been our loss
" Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach;
" For which to the infinitely Good we owe
" Immortal thanks, and his admonishment
" Receive, with solemn purpose to observe
" Immutably his sovran will—the end
" Of what we are. But since thou hast vouchsafed
" Gently, for our instruction, to impart
" Things above earthly thought, which yet concerned
" Our knowing, as to highest wisdom seemed,
" Deign to descend now lower, and relate
" What may no less perhaps avail us known—
" How first began this Heaven which we behold
" Distant so high, with moving fires adorned
" Innumerable; and this which yields, or fills
" All space, the ambient air, wide interfused,
" Embracing round this florid Earth—what cause
" Moved the Creator, in his holy rest
" Through all eternity, so late to build
" In Chaos; and the work begun, how soon
" Absolved; if unforbid thou mayst unfold
" What we, not to explore the secrets, ask,
" Of his eternal empire, but the more
" To magnify his works the more we know:
" And the great light of day yet wants to run
" Much of his race, though steep, suspense in Heaven
" Held by thy voice: thy potent voice he hears,
" And longer will delay to hear thee tell

" His generation, and the rising birth
" Of Nature from the unapparent deep:
" Or if the Star of evening and the Moon
" Haste to thy audience, Night with her will bring
" Silence; and Sleep, listening to thee, will watch;
" Or we can bid his absence, till thy song
" End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine."
Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought;
And thus the godlike angel answered mild:
" This also thy request, with caution asked,
" Obtain: though, to recount almighty works,
" What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,
" Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?
" Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
" To glorify the Maker, and infer
" Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
" Thy hearing; such commission from above
" I have received, to answer thy desire
" Of knowledge within bounds; beyond, abstain
" To ask; nor let thine own inventions hope
" Things not revealed, which the invisible King,
" Only Omniscient, hath suppressed in night,
" To none communicable in Earth or Heaven:
" Enough is left besides to search and know:
" But knowledge is as food, and needs no less
" Her temperance over appetite, to know
" In measure what the mind may well contain;
" Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
" Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.
" Know then, that, after Lucifer from Heaven
" (So call him, brighter once amidst the host
" Of angels, than that star the stars among)
" Fell, with his flaming legions, through the deep
" Into his place, and the great Son returned
" Victorious with his saints, the Omnipotent,
" Eternal Father from his throne beheld
" Their multitude, and to his son thus spake:
" 'At least our envious foe hath failed, who thought
" All like himself rebellious, by whose aid
" This inaccessible high strength, the seat

" Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,
" He trusted to have seized; and into fraud
" Drew many, whom their place knows here no more:
" Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,
" Their station: Heaven, yet populous, retains
" Numbers sufficient to possess her realms
" Though wide, and this high temple to frequent
" With ministeries due, and solemn rites:
" But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm
" Already done, to have dispeopled Heaven—
" My damage fondly deemed,—I can repair
" That detriment, if such it be to lose
" Self-lost; and in a moment will create
" Another world—out of one man a race
" Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
" Not here; till, by degrees of merit raised,
" They open to themselves at length the way
" Up hither, under long obedience tried;
" And Earth be changed to Heaven, and Heaven to Earth—
" One kingdom, joy, and union, without end.
" Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye Powers of Heaven!
" And thou, my Word, begotten Son! by thee
" This I perform; speak thou, and be it done!
" My overshadowing Spirit and Might with thee
" I send along: ride forth, and bid the deep
" Within appointed bounds be Heaven and Earth;
" Boundless the deep, because I AM who fill
" Infinitude: nor vacuous the space
" Though I, uncircumscribed myself, retire,
" And put not forth my goodness, which is free
" To act or not: necessity and chance
" Approach not me; and what I will is fate.'
" So spake the Almighty, and to what he spake,
" His Word, the filial Godhead, gave effect.
" Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
" Than time or motion; but to human ears
" Cannot without process of speech be told,
" So told as earthly notion can receive.
" Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heaven,

" When such was heard declared the Almighty's will;
" Glory they sung to the Most High—good will
" To future men, and in their dwellings peace—
" Glory to him, whose just avenging ire
" Had driven out the ungodly from his sight
" And the habitations of the just—to him
" Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordained
" Good out of evil to create—instead
" Of spirits malign, a better race to bring
" Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse
" His good to worlds and ages infinite!
" So sang the Hierarchies: meanwhile the Son
" On his great expedition now appeared,
" Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned
" Of majesty divine! sapience and love
" Immense, and all his Father in him shone.
" About his chariot numberless were poured
" Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,
" And Virtues, wingèd Spirits, and chariots winged
" From the armoury of God; where stand of old
" Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged
" Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,
" Celestial equipage! and now came forth
" Spontaneous, for within them Spirit lived,
" Attendant on their Lord: Heaven opened wide
" Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound!
" On golden hinges moving, to let forth
" The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
" And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.
" On heavenly ground they stood; and from the shore
" They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss
" Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
" Up from the bottom turned by furious winds,
" And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
" Heaven's height, and with the centre mix the pole.
" 'Silence, ye troubled Waves, and thou Deep, peace!'
" Said then the Omnific Word; 'your discord end!'
" Nor staid; but, on the wings of Cherubim
" Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
" Far into Chaos, and the world unborn;

" For Chaos heard his voice: him all his train
" Followed in bright procession, to behold
" Creation, and the wonders of his might.
" Then staid the fervid wheels; and in his hand
" He took the golden compasses, prepared
" In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
" This universe, and all created things:
" One foot he centred, and the other turned
" Round through the vast profundity obscure;
" And said, 'Thus far extend—thus far thy bounds— 230
" This be thy circumference, O world!'
" Thus God the Heaven created, thus the Earth,—
" Matter unformed and void: darkness profound
" Covered the abyss; but on the watery calm
" His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
" And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth,
" Throughout the fluid mass; but downward purged
" The black, tartareous, cold, infernal dregs,
" Adverse to life: then founded, then conglobed
" Like things to like; the rest to several place 240
" Disparted; and, between, spun out the air:
" And Earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.
" 'Let there be light,' said God; and forthwith light
" Ethereal—first of things—quintessence pure,
" Sprung from the deep; and from her native East
" To journey through the airy gloom began,
" Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun
" Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle
" Sojourned the while. God saw the light was good;
" And light from darkness by the hemisphere 250
" Divided: light the Day, and darkness Night
" He named. Thus was the first day even and morn:
" Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung
" By the celestial quires, when orient light
" Exhaling first from darkness they beheld—
" Birthday of Heaven and Earth! with joy and shout
" The hollow universal orb they filled,
" And touched their golden harps, and hymning praised
" God and his works; Creator him they sung,
" Both when first evening was, and when first morn. 260

" Again God said, 'Let there be firmament
" Amid the waters, and let it divide
" The waters from the waters;' and God made
" The firmament—expanse of liquid, pure,
" Transparent, elemental air, diffused
" In circuit to the uttermost convex
" Of this great round—partition firm and sure,
" The waters underneath from those above
" Dividing: for as earth, so he the world
" Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide
" Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule
" Of Chaos far removed; lest fierce extremes
" Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:
" And Heaven he named the firmament: so even
" And morning chorus sung the second day.
" The earth was formed, but in the womb as yet
" Of waters, embryon immature, involved,
" Appeared not: over all the face of earth
" Main ocean flowed, not idle; but, with warm
" Prolific humour softening all her globe,
" Fermented the great mother to conceive,
" Satiate with genial moisture: when God said,
" 'Be gathered now, ye waters under Heaven,
" Into one place, and let dry land appear.'
" Immediately the mountains huge appear
" Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
" Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky:
" So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
" Down sunk a hollow bottom, broad, and deep—
" Capacious bed of waters: thither they
" Hasted with glad precipitance, uprolled,
" As drops on dust conglobing from the dry;
" Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
" For haste; such flight the great command impressed
" On the swift floods: as armies, at the call
" Of trumpets (for of armies thou hast heard),
" Troop to their standard; so the watery throng,
" Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,
" If steep, with torrent rapture; if through plain,
" Soft ebbing: nor withstood them rock or hill;

" But they, or under ground, or circuit wide
" With serpent error wandering, found their way,
" And on the washy ooze deep channels wore,
" Easy; ere God had bid the ground be dry,
" All but within those banks, where rivers now
" Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.
" The dry land, Earth, and the great receptacle
" Of congregated waters, he called Seas;
" And saw that it was good: and said, 'Let the Earth
" Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed,
" And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
" Whose seed is in herself upon the Earth.'
" He scarce had said, when the bare Earth, till then
" Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,
" Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
" Her universal face with pleasant green;
" Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered,
" Opening their various colours, and made gay
" Her bosom, smelling sweet: and, these scarce blown,
" Forth flourished thick the clustering vine; forth crept
" The swelling gourd; up stood the corny reed
" Embattled in her field, and the humble shrub,
" And bush with frizzled hair implicit: last,
" Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
" Their branches, hung with copious fruit, or gemmed
" Their blossoms: with high woods the hills were crowned,
" With tufts the valleys, and each fountain-side;
" With borders long the rivers: that Earth now
" Seemed like to Heaven, a seat where Gods might dwell,
" Or wander with delight, and love to haunt
" Her sacred shades: though God had yet not rained
" Upon the Earth, and man to till the ground
" None was; but from the Earth a dewy mist
" Went up, and watered all the ground, and each
" Plant of the field; which, ere it was in the earth,
" God made, and every herb, before it grew
" On the green stem: God saw that it was good:
" So even and morn recorded the third day.
" Again the Almighty spake, 'Let there be lights
" High in the expanse of Heaven, to divide

" The day from night; and let them be for signs,
" For seasons, and for days, and circling years;
" And let them be for lights, as I ordain
" Their office in the firmament of Heaven,
" To give light on the Earth :' and it was so.
" And God made two great lights, (great, for their use
" To man,) the greater to have rule by day,
" The less by night, altern; and made the stars,
" And set them in the firmament of Heaven
" To illuminate the Earth, and rule the day
" In their vicissitude, and rule the night,
" And light from darkness to divide. God saw,
" Surveying his great work, that it was good:
" For of celestial bodies first the Sun,
" A mighty sphere, he framed, unlightsome first,
" Though of ethereal mould: then formed the Moon
" Globose, and every magnitude of stars;
" And sowed with stars the Heaven, thick as a field:
" Of light by far the greater part he took,
" Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed
" In the Sun's orb, made porous to receive
" And drink the liquid light; firm to retain
" Her gathered beams—great palace now of light.
" Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
" Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,
" And hence the morning planet gilds her horns.
" By tincture or reflection they augment
" Their small peculiar, though, from human sight
" So far remote, with diminution seen.
" First in his East the glorious lamp was seen,
" Regent of day, and all the horizon round
" Invested with bright rays, jocund to run
" His longitude through Heaven's high road; the gray
" Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced,
" Shedding sweet influence: less bright the Moon,
" But opposite in levelled West was set—
" His mirror, with full face borrowing her light
" From him; for other light she needed none
" In that aspect; and still that distance keeps
" Till night; then in the East her turn she shines,

" Revolved on Heaven's great axle, and her reign
" With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,
" With thousand thousand stars, that then appeared
" Spangling the hemisphere—then first adorned
" With their bright luminaries, that set and rose:
" Glad evening and glad morn crowned the fourth day.
" And God said, 'Let the waters generate
" Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul:
" And let fowl fly above the earth, with wings
" Displayed on the open firmament of Heaven.'
" And God created the great whales, and each
" Soul living, each crept, which plenteously
" The waters generated by their kinds:
" And every bird of wing after his kind;
" And saw that it was good, and blessed them, saying,
" 'Be fruitful, multiply; and in the seas,
" And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill:
" And let the fowl be multiplied on the Earth.'
" Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
" With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
" Of fish that with their fins, and shining scales,
" Glide under the green wave, in sculls that oft
" Bank the mid sea: part single, or with mate,
" Graze the sea-weed their pasture, and through groves
" Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,
" Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold;
" Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
" Moist nutriment; or, under rocks, their food
" In jointed armour watch: on smooth the seal
" And bended dolphins play: part huge of bulk,
" Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
" Tempest the ocean: there leviathan,
" Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
" Stretched like a promontory, sleeps or swims,
" And seems a moving land; and at his gills
" Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.
" Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,
" Their brood as numerous hatch, from the egg that, soon
" Bursting with kindly rapture, forth disclosed
" Their callow young; but feathered soon and fledge

" They summed their pens; and, soaring the air sublime,
" With clang despised the ground, under a cloud
' In prospect: there the eagle and the stork
" On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build:
" Part loosely wing the region; part, more wise,
" In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
" Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
" Their airy caravan, high over seas
" Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
" Easing their flight; so steers the prudent crane
" Her annual voyage, borne on winds; the air
" Floats as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes.
" From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
" Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings
" Till even; nor then the solemn nightingale
" Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays.
" Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed
" Their downy breast; the swan, with archèd neck
" Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
" Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit
" The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower
" The mid aërial sky. Others on ground
" Walked firm; the crested cock, whose clarion sounds
" The silent hours; and the other, whose gay train
" Adorns him, coloured with the florid hue
" Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus
" With fish replenished, and the air with fowl,
" Evening and morn solémnized the fifth day.
" The sixth, and of creation last, arose
" With evening harps and matin; when God said,
" ' Let the earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
" Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
" Each in their kind.' The Earth obeyed, and straight
" Opening her fertile womb, teemed at a birth,
" Innumerous living creatures, perfect forms,
" Limbed and full grown. Out of the ground up rose,
" As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons
" In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den;
" Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked:
" The cattle in the fields and meadows green;

" Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
" Pasturing at once, and in broad herds up sprung.
" The grassy clods now calved; now half appeared
" The tawny lion, pawing to get free
" His hinder parts; then springs, as broke from bonds,
" And rampant shakes his brinded mane: the ounce,
" The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
" Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
" In hillocks: the swift stag from underground
" Bore up his branching head: scarce from his mould,
" Behemoth, biggest born of Earth, upheaved
" His vastness: fleeced the flocks and bleating rose,
" As plants; ambiguous between sea and land,
" The river-horse, and scaly crocodile.
" At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,
" Insect or worm: those waved their limber fans
" For wings, and smallest lineaments exact
" In all the liveries decked of summer's pride,
" With spots of gold and purple, azure and green:
" These, as a line, their long dimension drew,
" Streaking the ground with sinuous trace; not all
" Minims of nature; some of serpent kind,
" Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved
" Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept
" The parsimonious emmet, provident
" Of future; in small room large heart inclosed;
" Pattern of just equality perhaps
" Hereafter, joined in her popular tribes
" Of commonalty: swarming next appeared
" The female bee, that feeds her husband drone
" Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
" With honey stored. The rest are numberless,
" And thou their natures knowest, and gavest them names,
" Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown
" The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field,
" Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
" And hairy mane terrific, though to thee
" Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.
" Now Heaven in all her glory shone, and rolled
" Her motions, as the great first Mover's hand

" First wheeled their course; Earth in her rich attire
" Consummate lovely smiled! air, water, Earth,
" By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked,
" Frequent; and of the sixth day yet remained—
" There wanted yet the master-work, the end
" Of all yet done; a creature, who, not prone
" And brute as other creatures, but endued
" With sanctity of reason, might erect
" His stature, and upright with front serene
" Govern the rest, self-knowing; and from thence
" Magnanimous, to correspond with Heaven,
" But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
" Descends; thither with heart, and voice, and eyes,
" Directed in devotion, to adore
" And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
" Of all his works: therefore the Omnipotent,
" Eternal Father, (for where is not he
" Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake:
" ' Let us make now Man in our image, Man
" In our similitude, and let them rule
" Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
" Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
" And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.'
" This said, he formed thee, Adam, thee, O Man!
" Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
" The breath of life; in his own image he
" Created thee, in the image of God
" Express; and thou becamest a living soul.
" Male he created thee; but thy consort
" Female, for race; then blessed mankind, and said,
" ' Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth;
" Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold
" Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,
" And every living thing that moves on the earth.'
" Wherever thus created, (for no place
" Is yet distinct by name,) thence, as thou knowst,
" He brought thee into this delicious grove,
" This garden, planted with the trees of God,
" Delectable both to behold and taste;
" And freely all their pleasant fruit for food

" Gave thee : all sorts are here that all the Earth yields,
" Variety without end : but of the tree,
" Which, tasted, works knowledge of good and evil,
" Thou mayst not ; in the day thou eatst, thou diest :
" Death is the penalty imposed ; beware,
" And govern well thy appetite ; lest Sin
" Surprise thee, and her black attendant, Death.
" Here finished he, and all that he had made
" Viewed, and, behold, all was entirely good ;
" So even and morn accomplished the sixth day :
" Yet not till the Creator, from his work
" Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,
" Up to the Heaven of Heavens, his high abode ;
" Thence to behold this new-created world,
" The addition of his empire—how it showed
" In prospect from his throne—how good—how fair,
" Answering his great idea. Up he rode,
" Followed with acclamation, and the sound
" Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
" Angelic harmonies : the earth, the air
" Resounded—(thou rememberst, for thou heardst,)—
" The heavens and all the constellations rung—
" The planets in their station listening stood—
" While the bright promp ascended jubilant.
" ' Open, ye everlasting gates ! ' they sung ;
" ' Open, ye heavens ! your living doors ; let in
" The great Creator, from his work returned
" Magnificent, his six days' work, a world !
" Open, and henceforth oft ; for God will deign
" To visit oft the dwellings of just men,
" Delighted ; and with frequent intercourse
" Thither will send his winged messengers
" On errands of supernal grace.' So sung
" The glorious train ascending. He through Heaven,
" That opened wide her blazing portals, led
" To God's eternal house direct the way ;
" A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold,
" And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear,
" Seen in the galaxy,—that milky way,
" Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou seest

" Powdered with stars. " And now on earth the seventh
" Evening arose in Eden, for the Sun
" Was set, and Twilight from the East came on,
" Forerunning Night; when at the holy mount
" Of Heaven's high-seated top,—the imperial throne
" Of Godhead, fixed for ever firm and sure,—
" The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
" With his great Father; for he also went
" Invisible, yet staid, (such privilege
" Hath Omnipresence,) and the work ordained,
" Author and End of all things; and, from work
" Now resting, blessed and hallowed the seventh day,
" As resting on that day from all his work:
" But not in silence holy kept: the harp
" Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe,
" And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
" All sounds on fret, by string or golden wire,
" Tempered soft tuning, intermixed with voice
" Choral or unison: of incense clouds,
" Fuming from golden censers, hid the mount.
" Creation and the six days' acts they sung:
" 'Great are thy works, Jehovah! infinite
" Thy power! What thought can measure thee, or tongue
" Relate thee? Greater now in thy return
" Than from the giant Angels; thee that day
" Thy thunders magnified; but to create
" Is greater, than created to destroy.
" Who can impair thee, Mighty King! or bound
" Thy empire? easily the proud attempt
" Of Spirits apostate, and their counsels vain,
" Thou hast repelled; while impiously they thought
" Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
" The number of thy worshippers. Who seeks
" To lessen thee, against his purpose serves
" To manifest the more thy might: his evil
" Thou usest, and from thence greatest more good.
" Witness this new-made world, another Heaven!
" From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view
" On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea;

" Of amplitude almost immense, with stars
" Numerous, and every star perhaps a world
" Of destined habitation; but thou knowst
" Their seasons: among these, the seat of Men,
" Earth with her nether ocean circumfused,
" Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy Men,
" And sons of Men, whom God has thus advanced!
" Created in his image, there to dwell
" And worship him; and, in reward, to rule
" Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air,
" And multiply a race of worshippers
" Holy and just: thrice happy, if they know
" Their happiness, and persevere upright!'
" So sung they, and the empyréan rung
" With halleluiahs: thus was Sabbath kept.
" And thy request think now fulfilled, that asked
" How first this world and face of things began,
" And what, before thy memory, was done
' From the beginning; that posterity,
" Informed by thee, might know: if else thou seekst
" Aught, not surpassing human measure, say."

Eighth Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

ADAM inquires concerning celestial motions; is doubtfully answered, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge; Adam assents; and, still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation; his placing in Paradise; his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society; his first meeting and nuptials with Eve; his discourse with the angel thereupon; who, after admonitions repeated, departs.

The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear;
Then, as new-waked, thus gratefully replied:
" What thanks sufficient, or what recompense
" Equal, have I to render thee, divine
" Historian! who thus largely hast allayed
" The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsafed
" This friendly condescension to relate
" Things else by me unsearchable; now heard
" With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,
" With glory attributed to the high
" Creator? Something yet of doubt remains,
" Which only thy solution can resolve.
" When I behold this goodly frame, this world,
" Of Heaven and Earth consisting, and compute
" Their magnitudes; this Earth, a spot, a grain,
" An atom, with the firmament compared
" And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll
" Spaces incomprehensible, (for such
" Their distance argues, and their swift return

" Diurnal,) merely to officiate light
" Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,
" One day and night; in all their vast survey
" Useless besides: reasoning I oft admire,
" How Nature, wise and frugal, could commit
" Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
" So many nobler bodies to create,
" Greater so manifold, to this one use,
" For aught appears, and on their orbs impose
" Such restless revolution day by day
" Repeated; while the sedentary earth,
" That better might with far less compass move,
" Served by more noble than herself, attains
" Her end without least motion, and receives,
" As tribute,—such a sumless journey brought
" Of incorporeal speed—her warmth and light;
" Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails."
So spake our sire, and by his countenance seemed
Entering on studious thoughts abstruse; which Eve
Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight;
With lowliness majestic from her seat,
And grace, that won who saw to wish her stay,
Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,
To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom,
Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,
And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.
Yet went she not as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her ear
Of what was high: such pleasure she reserved,
Adam relating, she sole auditress:
Her husband the relater she preferred
Before the angel, and of him to ask
Chose rather; he, she knew, would intermix
Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
With conjugal caresses; from his lip
Not words alone pleased her.—O! when meet now
Such pairs, in love and mutual honour joined?—
With goddess-like demeanour forth she went,
Not unattended; for on her, as queen,
A pomp of winning Graces waited still,

And from about her shot darts of desire
Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.
And Raphael now, to Adam's doubt proposed,
Benevolent and facile thus replied:
" To ask or search, I blame thee not; for Heaven
" Is as the book of God before thee set,
" Wherein to read his wondrous works, and learn
" His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years:
" This to attain, whether Heaven move or Earth,
" Imports not, if thou reckon right; the rest
" From man or angel the great Architect
" Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
" His secrets to be scanned by them who ought
" Rather admire; or, if they list to try
" Conjecture, he his fabric of the heavens
" Hath left to their disputes; perhaps to move
" His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
" Hereafter, when they come to model Heaven
" And calculate the stars; how they will wield
" The mighty frame;—how build, unbuild, contrive,
" To save appearances;—how gird the sphere
" With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,
" Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb:
" Already by thy reasoning this I guess,
" Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest
" That bodies bright and greater should not serve
" The less not bright; nor Heaven such journeys run,
" Earth sitting still, when she alone receives
" The benefit. Consider first, that great,
" Or bright, infers not excellence: the Earth,
" Though, in comparison of Heaven, so small,
" Nor glistering, may of solid good contain
" More plenty than the Sun that barren shines;
" Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
" But in the fruitful earth; there first received,
" His beams, inactive else, their vigour find.
" Yet not to Earth are those bright luminaries
" Officious; but to thee, Earth's habitant.
" And for the Heaven's wide circuit, let it speak
" The Maker's high magnificence, who built

" So spacious, and his line stretched out so far,
" That man may know he dwells not in his own;
" An edifice too large for him to fill,
" Lodged in a small partition; and the rest
" Ordained for uses to his Lord best known.
" The swiftness of those circles áttribute,
" Though numberless, to his omnipotence,
" That to corporeal substances could add
" Speed almost spiritual: me thou thinkest not slow,
" Who since the morning-hour set out from Heaven,
" Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived
" In Eden; distance inexpressible
" By numbers that have name! But this I urge,
" Admitting motion in the Heavens, to show
" Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved;
" Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
" To thee, who hast thy dwelling here on earth.
" God, to remove his ways from human sense,
" Placed Heaven from Earth so far, that earthly sight,
" If it presume, might err in things too high,
" And no advantage gain. What if the Sun
" Be centre to the world; and other stars,
" By his attractive virtue and their own
" Incited, dance about him various rounds?
" Their wandering course, now high, now low, then hid,
" Progressive, retrogade, or standing still,
" In six thou seest; and what if seventh to these
" The planet Earth, so steadfast though she seem,
" Insensibly three different motions move?
" Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,
" Moved contrary with thwart obliquities;
" Or save the Sun his labour, and that swift
" Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,
" Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
" Of day and night: which needs not thy belief,
" If Earth, industrious of herself, fetch day
" Travelling east, and with her part averse
" From the Sun's beam meet night, her other part
" Still luminous by his ray. What if that light,
" Sent from her through the wide transpicuous air,

" To the terrestrial Moon be as a star,
" Enlightening her by day, as she by night
" This Earth, reciprocal, if land be there,
" Fields and inhabitants? Her spots thou seest
" As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce
" Fruits in her softened soil, for some to eat
" Allotted there; and other suns perhaps,
" With their attendant moons, thou wilt descry,
" Communicating male and female light
" (Which two great sexes animate the world),
" Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live:
" For such vast room in nature unpossessed
" By living soul, desert and desolate,
" Only to shine, yet scarce to cóntribute
" Each orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far
" Down to this habitable, which returns
" Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.
" But whether thus these things, or whether not,—
" Whether the Sun, predominant in Heaven,
" Rise on the Earth, or Earth rise on the Sun;
" He from the East his flaming road begin,
" Or she from West her silent course advance
" With inoffensive pace, that spinning sleeps
" On her soft axle, while she paces even,
" And bears thee soft with the smooth air along;
" Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid:
" Leave them to God above; him serve and fear.
" Of other creatures, as him pleases best,
" Wherever placed, let him dispose; joy thou
" In what he gives to thee—this Paradise
" And thy fair Eve: Heaven is for thee too high
" To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
" Think only what concerns thee, and thy being;
" Dream not of other worlds; what creatures there
" Live, in what state, condition, or decree:
" Contented that thus far hath been revealed,
" Not of Earth only, but of highest Heaven."
To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied:
" How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure
" Intelligence of Heaven, Angel serene!

"And, freed from intricacies, taught to live
"The easiest way: nor with perplexing thoughts
"To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
"God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
"And not molest us; unless we ourselves
"Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain.
"But apt the mind, or fancy, is to rove
"Unchecked, and of her roving is no end;
"Till, warned, or by experience taught, she learn,
"That not to know at large of things remote
"From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
"That which before us lies in daily life,
"Is the prime wisdom: what is more, is fume,
"Or emptiness, or fond impertinence;
"And renders us, in things that most concern.
"Unpractised, unprepared and still to seek.
"Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
"A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
"Useful; whence, haply, mention may arise
"Of something not unseasonable to ask,
"By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deigned.
"Thee I have heard relating what was done
"Ere my remembrance: now, hear me relate
"My story, which perhaps thou hast not heard;
"And day is not yet spent: till then thou seest
"How subtly to detain thee I devise,
"Inviting thee to hear while I relate;
"Fond! were it not in hope of thy reply:
"For, while I sit with thee, I seem in Heaven;
"And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
"Than fruits of palm-tree, pleasantest to thirst
"And hunger both, from labour, at the hour
"Of sweet repast: they satiate, and soon fill,
"Though pleasant; but thy words, with grace divine
"Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety."
To whom thus Raphael answered heavenly meek:
"Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of Men!
"Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
"Abundantly his gifts hath also poured;
"Inward and outward both his image fair:

" Speaking, or mute, all comeliness and grace
" Attends thee, and each word, each motion forms.
" Nor less think we in Heaven of thee on Earth
" Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire
" Gladly into the ways of God with man:
" For God, we see, hath honoured thee, and set
" On man his equal love: say therefore on;
" For I that day was absent, as befell,
" Bound on a voyage úncouth and obscure,
" Far on excursion towards the gates of Hell;
" Squared in full legion (such command we had,)
" To see that none thence issued forth a spy,
" Or enemy while God was in his work;
" Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold,
" Destruction with creation might have mixed.
" Not that they durst without his leave attempt:
" But us he sends upon his high behests
" For state, as Sovran King; and to inure
" Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut,
" The dismal gates, and barricaded strong;
" But, long ere our approaching, heard within
" Noise, other than the sound of dance or song;
" Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage!
" Glad we returned up to the coasts of light
" Ere Sabbath evening: so we had in charge.
" But thy relation now; for I attend,
" Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine."
So spake the godlike Power, and thus our Sire:
" For man to tell how human life began
" Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?
" Desire with thee still longer to converse
" Induced me. As new waked from soundest sleep,
" Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid,
" In balmly sweat; which with his beams the Sun
" Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.
" Straight toward Heaven my wondering eyes I turned,
" And gazed awhile the ample sky; till, raised
" By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
" As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
" Stood on my feet. About me round I saw

" Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
" And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,
" Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew;
" Birds on the branches warbling; all things smiled
" With fragrance, and with joy my heart o'erflowed.
" Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
" Surveyed, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
" With supple joints, as lively vigour led:
" But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
" Knew not: to speak I tried, and forthwith spake;
" My tongue obeyed, and readily could name
" Whate'er I saw. 'Thou Sun,' said I, 'fair light!
" And thou enlightened Earth, so fresh and gay!
" Ye hills, and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
" And ye that live and move, fair creatures! tell,
" Tell, if ye saw, how I came thus, how here?
" Not of myself; by some great Maker then,
" In goodness and in power pre-eminent:
" Tell me how may I know him, how adore,
" From whom I have that thus I move and live,
" And feel that I am happier than I know?'
" While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither,
" From where I first drew air, and first beheld
" This happy light; when answer none returned,
" On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
" Pensive I sat me down: there gentle sleep
" First found me, and with soft oppression seized
" My drowsèd sense, untroubled, though I thought
" I then was passing to my former state,
" Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:
" When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
" Whose inward apparition gently moved
" My fancy to believe I yet had being,
" And lived. One came, methought, of shape divine,
" And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,
" First man, of men innumerable ordained
" First father! called by thee, I come thy guide
" To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.'
" So saying, by the hand he took me raised,
" And, over fields and waters, as in air,

" Smooth sliding without step, last led me up
" A woody mountain, whose high top was plain—
" A circuit wide, inclosed with goodliest trees,
" Planted with walks and bowers; that what I saw
" Of earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree,
" Laden with fairest fruit, that hung to the eye
" Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite
" To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found
" Before mine eyes all real, as the dream
" Had lively shadowed. Here had new begun
" My wandering, had not He, who was my guide
" Up hither, from among the trees appeared,
" Presence Divine! Rejoicing, but with awe,
" In adoration at his feet I fell
" Submiss: he reared me, and, 'Whom thou soughtst I am,'
" Said mildly; 'Author of all this thou seest
" Above, or round about thee, or beneath.
" This Paradise I give thee; count it thine
" To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat:
" Of every tree that in the garden grows
" Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth:
" But of the tree, whose operation brings
" Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set,
" The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
" Amid the garden, by the tree of life,
" (Remember what I warn thee!) shun to taste,
" And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
" The day thou eatest thereof,—my sole command
" Transgressed,—inevitably thou shalt die,
" From that day mortal; and this happy state
" Shalt lose, expelled from hence into a world
" Of woe and sorrow.' Sternly he pronounced
" The rigid interdiction, which resounds
" Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice
" Not to incur: but soon his clear aspect
" Returned, and gracious purpose thus renewed:
" 'Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth
" To thee and to thy race I give; as lords
" Possess it, and all things that therein live,
" Or live in sea or air—beast, fish, and fowl.

" In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold
" After their kinds; I bring them to receive
" From thee their names, and pay the feälty
" With low subjection: understand the same
" Of fish within their watery residence,
" Not hither summoned, since they cannot change
" Their element to draw the thinner air.'
" As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
" Approaching, two and two—these cowering low
" With blandishment—each bird stooped on his wing.
" I named them as they passed, and understood
" Their nature; with such knowledge God endued
" My sudden apprehension. But in these
" I found not what, methought, I wanted still;
" And to the heavenly vision thus presumed:
" ' O, by what name,—for thou above all these,
" Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
" Surpassest far my naming!—how may I
" Adore thee, Author of this universe,
" And all this good to man? for whose well-being
" So amply, and with hands so liberal,
" Thou hast provided all things: but with me
" I see not who partakes. In solitude
" What happiness? who can enjoy alone;
" Or, all enjoying, what contentment find?'
" Thus I presumptuous; and the Vision bright,
" As with a smile more brightened thus replied:
" ' What callst thou solitude? Is not the Earth
" With various living creatures, and the air
" Replenished, and all these at thy command
" To come and play before thee? Knowst thou not
" Their language and their ways? They also know,
" And reason not contemptibly: with these
" Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.'
" So spake the Universal Lord, and seemed
" So ordering: I, with leave of speech implored,
" And humble deprecation, thus replied:
" ' Let not my words offend thee, heavenly Power!
" My Maker, be propitious while I speak!
" Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,

" And these, inferior far, beneath me set?
" Among unequals what society
" Can sort? what harmony, or true delight?
" Which must be mutual, in proportion due
" Given and received; but, in disparity,
" The one intense, the other still remiss,
" Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
" Tedious alike. Of fellowship I speak,
" Such as I seek, fit to participate
" All rational delight; wherein the brute
" Cannot be human consort: they rejoice
" Each with their kind, lion with lioness;
" So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined:
" Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl
" So well converse; nor with the ox the ape;
" Worse then can man with beast, and least of all.'
" Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeased:
" 'A nice and subtle happiness, I see,
" Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice
" Of thy associates, Adam! and wilt taste
" No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.
" What thinkst thou then of me, and this my state?
" Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed
" Of happiness, or not? who am alone
" From all eternity; for none I know
" Second to me or like, equal much less.
" How have I then with whom to hold converse,
" Save with the creatures which I made, and those
" To me inferior, infinite descents
" Beneath what other creatures are to thee?'
" He ceased; I lowly answered: 'To attain
" The height and depth of thy eternal ways
" All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things!
" Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
" Is no deficience found: not so is man,
" But in degree—the cause of his desire
" By conversation with his like to help,
" Or solace his defects. No need that thou
" Shouldst propagate, already Infinite;
" And through all numbers absolute, though One:

" But man by number is to manifest
" His single imperfection, and beget
" Like of his like, his image multiplied;
" In unity defective, which requires
" Collateral love, and dearest amity.
" Thou, in thy secresy, although alone,
" Best with thyself accompanied, seekst not
" Social communication; yet, so pleased,
" Canst raise thy creature to what height thou wilt
" Of union, or communion, deified:
" I, by conversing, cannot these erect
" From prone; nor in their ways complacence find.'
" Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used
" Permissive, and acceptance found: which gained
" This answer from the gracious Voice Divine:
" 'Thus far to try thee, Adam! I was pleased;
" And find thee knowing, not of beasts alone,
" Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself:
" Expressing well the spirit within thee free,—
" My image,—not imparted to the brute;
" Whose fellowship therefore, unmeet for thee,
" Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike;
" And be so minded still: I, ere thou spakest,
" Knew it not good for man to be alone:
" And no such company as then thou sawst
" Intended thee; for trial only brought,
" To see how thou couldst judge of fit and meet:
" What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,—
" Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,—
" Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.'
" He ended, or I heard no more; for now
" My earthly by his heavenly overpowered,
" Which it had long stood under, strained to the height
" In that celestial colloquy sublime,
" (As with an object that excels the sense,
" Dazzled and spent,) sunk down; and sought repair
" Of Sleep, which instantly fell on me, called
" By nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.
" Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell
" Of fancy, my internal sight; by which,

" Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw,
" Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape,
" Still glorious, before whom awake I stood;
" Who stooping, opened my left side, and took
" From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
" And life-blood streaming fresh: wide was the wound,
" But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed:
" The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;
" Under his forming hands a creature grew,
" Man like, but different sex; so lovely fair,
" That what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now
" Mean, or in her summed up—in her contained
" And in her looks; which from that time infused
" Sweetness into my heart unfelt before,
" And into all things from her air inspired
" The spirit of love, and amorous delight.
" She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked –
" To find her, or for ever to deplore
" Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure.
" When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
" Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned
" With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
" To make her amiable! On she came,
" Led by her heavenly Maker, though unseen,
" And guided by his voice; nor uninformed
" Of nuptial sanctity, and marriage rites:
" Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye,
" In every gesture dignity and love!
" I, overjoyed, could not forbear aloud:
" 'This turn hath made amends: thou hast fulfilled
" Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
" Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
" Of all thy gifts! nor enviest. I now see
" Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
" Before me: Woman is her name; of Man
" Extracted: for this cause he shall forego
" Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
" And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.'
" She heard me thus; and though divinely brought,
" Yet innocence, and virgin modesty,

" Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
" That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,
" Not obvious, not obtrusive, but, retired,
" The more desirable; or, to say all,
" Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,—
" Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turned:
" I followed her; she what was honour knew,
" And, with obsequious majesty, approved
" My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower
" I led her blushing like the Morn: all Heaven,
" And happy constellations, on that hour
" Shed their selectest influence; the Earth
" Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;
" Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs
" Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings
" Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,
" Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
" Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening star
" On his hill top to light the bridal lamp.
" Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought
" My story to the sum of earthly bliss,
" Which I enjoy; and must confess to find
" In all things else delight indeed, but such
" As, used or not, works in the mind no change,
" Nor vehement desire; these delicacies
" I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,
" Walks, and the melody of birds: but here
" Far otherwise! transported I behold,
" Transported touch—here passion first I felt,
" Commotion strange! in all enjoyments else
" Superior and unmoved—here only weak
" Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.
" Or nature failed in me, and left some part
" Not proof enough such object to sustain;
" Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps
" More than enough; at least on her bestowed
" Too much of ornament, in outward show
" Elaborate, of inward less exact.
" For well I understand, in the prime end
" Of nature, her the inferior, in the mind

" And inward faculties, which most excel;
" In outward also her resembling less
" His image who made both, and less expressing
" The character of that dominion given
" O'er other creatures: yet, when I approach
" Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
" And in herself complete, so well to know
" Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
" Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best:
" All higher knowledge in her presence falls
" Degraded; wisdom in discourse with her
" Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows:
" Authority and reason on her wait,
" As one intended first, not after made
" Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
" Greatness of mind, and nobleness, their seat
" Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
" About her, as a guard angelic placed."
To whom the Angel, with contracted brow:
" Accuse not nature; she hath done her part:
" Do thou but thine; and be not diffident
" Of wisdom; she deserts thee not, if thou
" Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,
" By attributing overmuch to things
" Less excellent, as thou thyself perceivest.
" For, what admirest thou, what transports thee so?
" An outside! fair, no doubt, and worthy well
" Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love;
" Not thy subjection: weigh with her thyself;
" Then value: oft-times nothing profits more
" Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right,
" Well managed; of that skill the more thou knowst,
" The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
" And to realities yield all her shows:
" Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
" So awful, that with honour thou mayst love
" Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.
" But if the sense of touch, whereby mankind
" Is propagated, seem such dear delight
" Beyond all other; think the same vouchsafed

" To cattle and each beast! which would not be
" To them made common, and divulged, if aught
" Therein enjoyèd were worthy to subdue
" The soul of man, or passion in him move.
" What higher in her society thou findst
" Attractive, human, rational, love still;
" In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
" Wherein true love consists not: love refines
" The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his seat
" In reason, and is judicious; is the scale
" By which to heavenly love thou mayst ascend,
" Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause,
" Among the beasts no mate for thee was found."
To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied:
" Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught
" In procreation common to all kinds,
" (Though higher of the genial bed by far,
" And with mysterious reverence I deem,)
" So much delights me, as those graceful acts,
" Those thousand decencies, that daily flow
" From all her words and actions, mixed with love
" And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned
" Union of mind, or in us both one soul;
" Harmony to behold in wedded pair
" More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
" Yet these subject not: I to thee disclose
" What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled;
" Who meet with various objects, from the sense
" Variously representing; yet, still free,
" Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
" To love, thou blamest me not; for love, thou sayst,
" Leads up to Heaven—is both the way and guide;
" Bear with me then, if lawful what I ask:
" Love not the heavenly spirits, and how their love
" Express they? by looks only? or do they mix
" Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?"
To whom the angel, with a smile that glowed
Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,
Answered: " Let it suffice thee that thou knowst
" Us happy; and without love no happiness,

" Whatever pure thou in the body enjoyst, —
" And pure thou wert created,—we enjoy
" In eminence; and obstacle find none
" Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars:
" Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
" Total they mix, union of pure with pure
" Desiring; nor restrained conveyance need,
" As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
" But I can now no more: the parting Sun,
" Beyond the Earth's green cape and verdant isles
" Hesperian, sets; my signal to depart.
" Be strong, live happy, and love! but, first of all,
" Him, whom to love is to obey; and keep
" His great command: take heed, lest passion sway
" Thy judgment to do aught, which else free will
" Would not admit: thine, and of all thy sons,
" The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware!
" I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
" And all the blest. Stand fast! to stand, or fall,
" Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.
" Perfect within, no outward aid require;
" And all temptation to transgress repel."
So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus
Followed with benediction: " Since to part,
" Go, heavenly guest, ethereal messenger,
" Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore!
" Gentle to me and affable hath been
" Thy condescension, and shall be honoured ever
" With grateful memory: thou to mankind
" Be good and friendly still, and oft return!"
So parted they; the Angel up to Heaven
From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

Ninth Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

SATAN having encompassed the Earth, with meditated guile returns, as a mist, by night into Paradise; enters into the serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labours, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart: Adam consents not, alleging the danger, lest that enemy, of whom they were forewarned, should attempt her found alone. Eve, loth to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength; Adam at last yields: the serpent finds her alone: his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking; with much flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve, wondering to hear the serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech, and such understanding, not till now: the serpent answers, that by tasting of a certain tree in the garden he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both: Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, and finds it to be the tree of knowledge forbidden; the serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments, induces her at length to eat: she, pleased with the taste, deliberates awhile whether to impart thereof to Adam or not; at last brings him of the fruit; relates what persuaded her to eat thereof: Adam, at first amazed, but perceiving her lost, resolves, through vehemence of love, to perish with her; and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit: the effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

No more of talk where God or angel guest
With Man, as with his friend, familiar used
To sit indulgent, and with him partake
Rural repast; permitting him the while
Venial discourse unblamed. I now must change
Those notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal, on the part of Man; revolt,
And disobedience: on the part of Heaven
Now alienated, distance and distaste;

Anger, and just rebuke, and judgment given,
That brought into this world a world of woe,—
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
Death's harbinger. Sad task! yet argument
Not less, but more heroic, than the wrath
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son;
If answerable style I can obtain
Of my celestial patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse,
Since first this subject for heroic song
Pleased me, long choosing and beginning late;
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed; chief mastery to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights,
In battles feigned; (the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung;) or to describe races and games,
Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and tournament; then marshalled feast
Served up in hall with sewers and seneschals;
The skill of artifice or office mean!
Not that which justly gives heroic name
To person, or to poem. Me, of these
Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
Remains; sufficient of itself to raise
That name, unless an age too late, or cold
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing
Depressed; and much they may, if all be mine,
Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.
The Sun was sunk, and after him the star
Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring

Twilight upon the Earth, short arbiter
'Twixt day and night; and now, from end to end,
Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon round;
When Satan, who late fled before the threats
Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved
In meditated fraud and malice,—bent
On man's destruction, maugre what might hap
Of heavier on himself,—fearless returned.
By night he fled, and at midnight returned
From compassing the Earth; cautious of day,
Since Uriel, regent of the Sun, descried
His entrance, and forewarned the Cherubim
That kept their watch; thence, full of anguish, driven,
The space of seven continued nights he rode
With darkness; thrice the equinoctial line
He circled; four times crossed the car of Night
From pole to pole, travérsing each colúre;
On the eighth returned; and, on the coast averse
From entrance or cherubic watch, by stealth
Found unsuspected way. There was a place,
Now not, though sin, not time, first wrought the change,
Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,
Into a gulf shot under ground; till part
Rose up a fountain by the tree of life:
In with the river sunk, and with it rose,
Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought
Where to lie hid: sea he had searched, and land,
From Eden over Pontus, and the pool
Mæotis, up beyond the river Ob;
Downward as far antarctic; and in length,
West from Orontes to the Ocean barred
At Darien; thence to the land where flows
Ganges and Indus: thus the orb he roamed
With narrow search; and with inspection deep
Considered every creature, which of all
Most opportune might serve his wiles; and found
The serpent subtlest beast of all the field.
Him, after long debate, irresolute,
Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose;
Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom

To enter, and his dark suggestions hide
From sharpest sight; for, in the wily snake
Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark,
As from his wit and native subtlety
Proceeding; which, in other beasts observed,
Doubt might beget of diabolic power
Active within, beyond the sense of brute.
Thus he resolved; but first from inward grief
His bursting passion into plaints thus poured:
" O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferred
" More justly—seat worthier of Gods, as built
" With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
" For what God, after better, worse would build?
" Terrestrial Heaven, danced round by other Heavens
" That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps,
" Light above light, for thee alone, as seems;
" In thee concentring all their precious beams
" Of sacred influence! As God in Heaven
" Is centre, yet extends to all; so thou,
" Centring, receivest from all these orbs: in thee,
" Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears
" Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth
" Of creatures animate with gradual life,
" Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in Man.
" With what delight could I have walked thee round,
" If I could joy in aught! sweet interchange
" Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,
" Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crowned,
" Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these
" Find place or refuge; and the more I see
" Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
" Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
" Of contraries: all good to me becomes
" Bane; and in Heaven much worse would be my state.
" But neither here seek I, no, nor in Heaven
" To dwell, unless by mastering Heaven's Supreme:
" Nor hope to be myself less miserable
" By what I seek, but others to make such
" As I, though thereby worse to me redound:
" For only in destroying I find ease

" To my relentless thoughts; and, him destroyed,—
" Or won to what may work his utter loss,—
" For whom all this was made, all this will soon
" Follow, as to him linked in weal or woe—
" In woe then, that destruction wide may range!
" To me shall be the glory sole among
" The infernal Powers, in one day to have marred
" What he—Almighty styled—six nights and days
" Continued making; and who knows how long
" Before had been contriving? though perhaps
" Not longer than since I, in one night, freed
" From servitude inglorious well nigh half
" The angelic name, and thinner left the throng
" Of his adorers. He, to be avenged,
" And to repair his numbers thus impaired,
" (Whether such virtue spent of old now failed
" More angels to create, if they at least
" Are his created, or to spite us more),
" Determined to advance into our room
" A creature formed of earth; and him endow,
" Exalted from so base original,
" With heavenly spoils—our spoils! What he decreed,
" He effected; man he made, and for him built
" Magnificent this world, and Earth his seat,
" Him lord pronounced; and, O indignity!
" Subjected to his service angel-wings,
" And flaming ministers to watch and tend
" Their earthly charge. Of these the vigilance
" I dread; and, to elude, thus wrapped in mist
" Of midnight vapour glide obscure, and pry
" In every bush and brake, where hap may find
" The serpent sleeping; in whose mazy folds
" To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
" O foul descent! that I, who erst contended
" With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
" Into a beast; and, mixed with bestial slime,
" This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
" That to the height of deity aspired!
" But what will not ambition and revenge
" Descend to? Who aspires, must down as low

" As high he soared; obnoxious, first or last,
" To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
" Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils:
" Let it; I reck not, so it light well aimed
" (Since higher I fall short) on him who next
" Provokes my envy—this new favourite
" Of Heaven—this man of clay—son of despite;
" Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker raised
" From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid."
So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,
Like a black mist low creeping, he held on
His midnight search, where soonest he might find
The serpent: him fast sleeping soon he found
In labyrinth of many a round self-rolled,
His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:
Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
Nor nocent yet; but, on the grassy herb,
Fearless, unfeared, he slept. In at his mouth
The devil entered; and his brutal sense,
In heart or head, possessing, soon inspired
With act intelligential; but his sleep
Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.
Now, when as sacred light began to dawn
In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed
Their morning incense, when all things, that breathe
From the Earth's great altar send up silent praise
To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,
And joined their vocal worship to the quire
Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake
The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs:
Then commune, how that day they best may ply
Their growing work; for much their work outgrew
The hands' dispatch of two, gardening so wide;
And Eve first to her husband thus began:
" Adam, well may we labour still to dress
" This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower—
" Our pleasant task enjoined; but, till more hands
" Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
" Luxurious by restraint: what we by day

" Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
" One night or two with wanton growth derides,
" Tending to wild. Thou therefore now advise,
" Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present;
" Let us divide our labours; thou, where choice
" Leads thee, or where most needs; whether to wind
" The woodbine round this arbour, or direct
" The clasping ivy where to climb; while I,
" In yonder spring of roses intermixed
" With myrtle, find what to redress till noon:
" For, while so near each other thus all day
" Our task we choose, what wonder if so near
" Looks intervene and smiles, or object new
" Casual discourse draw on; which intermits
" Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
" Early, and the hour of supper comes unearned?"
To whom mild answer Adam thus returned:
" Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
" Compare above all living creatures dear!
" Well hast thou motioned, well thy thoughts employed
" How we might best fulfil the work which here
" God hath assigned us; nor of me shalt pass
" Unpraised; for nothing lovelier can be found
" In woman, than to study household good,
" And good works in her husband to promote.
" Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed
" Labour as to debar us, when we need,
" Refreshment, whether food, or talk between—
" Food of the mind—or this sweet intercourse
" Of looks or smiles; for smiles from reason flow,
" To brute denied, and are of love the food—
" Love, not the lowest end of human life.
" For not to irksome toil, but to delight,
" He made us, and delight to reason joined.
" These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands
" Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide
" As we need walk; till younger hands ere long
" Assist us: but if much converse perhaps
" Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield;
" For solitude sometimes is best society,

" And short retirement urges sweet return.
" But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
" Befall thee severed from me; for thou knowst
" What hath been warned us; what malicious foe,
" Envying our happiness, and of his own
" Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
" By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand
" Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
" His wish and best advantage—us asunder;
" Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each
" To other speedy aid might lend at need:
" Whether his first design be to withdraw
" Our fealty from God; or to disturb
" Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
" Enjoyed by us excites his envy more;
" Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
" That gave thee being, still shades thee, and protects.
" The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
" Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
" Who guards her, or with her the worst endures."
To whom the virgin majesty of Eve,
As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
With sweet austere composure thus replied:
" Offspring of Heaven and Earth, and all Earth's lord!
" That such an enemy we have, who seeks
" Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn,
" And from the parting Angel overheard,
" As in a shady nook I stood behind,
" Just then returned at shut of evening flowers.
" But that thou shouldst my firmness doubt
" To God, or thee, because we have a foe
" May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
" His violence thou fearest not, being such
" As we, not capable of death or pain,
" Can either not receive, or can repel.
" His fraud is then thy fear; which plain infers
" Thy equal fear, that my firm faith and love
" Can by his fraud be shaken, or seduced:
" Thoughts, which, how found they harbour in thy breast,
" Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?"

To whom with healing words Adam replied:
" Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve!
" For such thou art, from sin and blame entire:
" Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
" Thy absence from my sight; but to avoid
" The attempt itself, intended by our foe.
" For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
" The tempted with dishonour foul, supposed
" Not incorruptible of faith, not proof
" Against temptation: thou thyself with scorn
" And anger wouldst resent the offered wrong,
" Though ineffectual found: misdeem not, then,
" If such affront I labour to avert
" From thee alone, which on us both at once
" The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;
" Or daring, first on me the assault shall light,
" Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn,—
" Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce
" Angels,—nor think superfluous others' aid.
" I, from the influence of thy looks, receive
" Access in every virtue; in thy sight
" More wise, more watchful; stronger, if need were
" Of outward strength: while shame, thou looking on,
" Shame to be overcome or overreached,
" Would utmost vigour raise, and raised unite.
" Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel
" When I am present, and thy trial choose
" With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?"
So spake domestic Adam, in his care
And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought
Less attributed to her faith sincere,
Thus her reply with accent sweet renewed:
" If this be our condition, thus to dwell
" In narrow circuit, straitened by a foe,
" Subtle, or violent, we not endued
" Single with like defence wherever met;
" How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
" But harm precedes not sin: only our foe,
" Tempting, affronts us with his foul esteem
" Of our integrity: his foul esteem

" Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns
" Foul on himself: then wherefore shunned or feared
" By us? who rather double honour gain
" From his surmise proved false; find peace within.
" Favour from Heaven, our witness from the event.
" And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed
" Alone, without exterior help sustained?
" Let us not then suspect our happy state
" Left so imperfect by the Maker wise,
" As not secure to single or combined.
" Frail is our happiness, if this be so;
" And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed."
To whom thus Adam fervently replied:
" O woman! blest are all things, as the will
" Of God ordained them: his creating hand
" Nothing imperfect or deficient left
" Of all that he created: much less Man,
" Or aught that might his happy state secure—
" Secure from outward force; within himself
" The danger lies, yet lies within his power:
" Against his will he can receive no harm:
" But God left free the will; for what obeys
" Reason, is free; and reason he made right,
" But bid her well be ware, and still erect;
" Lest, by some fair-appearing good surprised,
" She dictate false, and misinform the will
" To do what God expressly hath forbid.
" Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins
" That I should mind thee oft; and mind thou me.
" Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve;
" Since reason not impossibly may meet
" Some specious object by the foe suborned,
" And fall into deception unaware,
" Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned.
" Seek not temptation then, which to avoid
" Were better, and most likely if from me
" Thou sever not: trial will come unsought.
" Wouldst thou approve thy constancy? approve
" First thy obedience; the other who can know,
" Not seeing thee attempted? who attest?

" But if thou think trial unsought may find
" Us both securer than, thus warned, thou seemst,
" Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more—
" Go in thy native innocence, rely
" On what thou hast of virtue; summon all!
" For God towards thee hath done his part: do thine."
So spake the patriarch of mankind; but Eve
Persisted; yet submiss, though last, replied:
" With thy permission then, and thus forewarned,
" Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
" Touched only; but our trial, when least sought,
" May find us both perhaps far less prepared;
" The willinger I go, nor much expect
" A foe so proud will first the weaker seek:
" So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse."
Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and like a Wood-nymph light,
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,
Betook her to the groves; but Delia's self
In gait surpassed, and goddess-like deport,
Though not, as she, with bow and quiver armed,
But with such gardening tools as art, yet rude,
Guiltless of fire, had formed, or angels brought.
To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorned,
Likest she seemed—Pomona, when she fled
Vertumnus—or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.
Her long, with ardent look, his eye pursued
Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
Oft he to her his charge of quick return
Repeated: she to him as oft engaged
To be returned by noon amid the bower,
And all things in best order to invite
Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.
O, much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve,
Of thy presumed return! event perverse!
Thou never from that hour in Paradise
Foundst either sweet repast, or sound repose:
Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades,
Waited with hellish rancour imminent

To intercept thy way, or send thee back
Despoiled of innocence—of faith—of bliss!
For now, and since first break of dawn, the fiend,
Mere serpent in appearance, forth was come;
And on his quest, where likeliest he might find
The only two of mankind, but in them
The whole included race, his purposed prey.
In bower and field he sought, where any tuft
Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay,
Their tendance, or plantation for delight:
By fountain or by shady rivulet
He sought them both, but wished his hap might find
Eve separate; he wished, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanced; when to his wish-
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
About her glowed, oft stooping to support
Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay
Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,
Hung drooping unsustained; them she upstays
Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh!
Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed
Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm;
Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen,
Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers
Imbordered on each bank, the hand of Eve!
Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned,
Or of revived Adonis, or renowned
Alcinous, host of old Laërtes' son;
Or that not mystic, where the sapient king
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.
Much he the place admired, the person more.
As one who, long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight—

The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy—each rural sight—each rural sound;
If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seemed, for her now pleases more;
She most, and in her look sums all delight:
Such pleasure took the serpent to behold
This flowery plat—the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone. Her heavenly form,—
Angelic, but more soft, and feminine,—
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture, or least action, overawed
His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
That space the evil one abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remained
Stupidly good; of enmity disarmed—
Of guile—of hate—of envy—of revenge!
But the hot Hell that always in him burns,
Though in mid Heaven, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees
Of pleasure, not for him ordained: then soon
Fierce hate he recollects; and all his thoughts
Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites:
" Thoughts, whither have ye led me? with what sweet
" Compulsion thus transported, to forget
" What hither brought us! hate, not love; nor hope
" Of Paradise for Hell—hope here to taste
" Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,
" Save what is in destroying: other joy
" To me is lost. Then, let me not let pass
" Occasion which now smiles: behold alone
" The woman, opportune to all attempts!
" Her husband (for I view far round) not nigh,
" Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
" And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
" Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould;
" Foe not informidable! exempt from wound,
" I not; so much hath Hell debased, and pain
" Enfeebled me to what I was in Heaven.
" She fair, divinely fair, fit love for Gods!

" Not terrible, though terror be in love
" And beauty, not approached by stronger hate—
" Hate stronger, under show of love well feigned
" The way which to her ruin now I tend."
So spake the enemy of mankind, inclosed
In serpent, inmate bad! and toward Eve
Addressed his way; not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since; but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that towered
Fold above fold, a surging maze! his head
Crested aloft; and carbuncle in his eyes;
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape
And lovely; never since of serpent kind
Lovelier; not those that in Illyria changed
Hermione and Cadmus, or the God
In Epidaurus; nor to which transformed
Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline was seen;
He with Olympias; this with her who bore
Scipio, the height of Rome. With tract oblique
At first, as one who sought access, but feared
To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
Nigh river's mouth, or foreland, where the wind
Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail:
So varied he, and of his tortuous train
Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
To lure her eye; she, busied, heard the sound
Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
To such disport before her through the field,
From every beast, more duteous at her call,
Than at Circean call the herd disguised.
He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,
But as in gaze admiring: oft he bowed
His turret crest, and sleek enamelled neck.
Fawning; and licked the ground whereon she trod,
His gentle dumb expression turned at length
The eye of Eve, to mark his play: he, glad
Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue

Organic, or impulse of vocal air,
His fraudulent temptation thus began:
"Wonder not, sovran mistress, (if perhaps
"Thou can'st, who art sole wonder), much less arm
"Thy looks, the Heaven of mildness, with disdain,
"Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze
"Insatiate —I thus single; nor have feared
"Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
"Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair!
"Thee all things living gaze on—all things thine
"By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore
"With ravishment beheld—there best beheld,
"Where universally admired; but here
"In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
"Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
"Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
"Who sees thee? (and what is one)? who shouldst be seen
"A Goddess among Gods, adored and served
"By Angels numberless, thy daily train."
So glozed the tempter, and his proem tuned:
Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
Though at the voice much marvelling: at length,
Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake:
"What may this mean? language of man pronounced
"By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed!
"The first, at least, of these I thought denied
"To beasts, whom God, on their creation-day,
"Created mute to all articulate sound:
"The latter I demur; for in their looks
"Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
"Thee, serpent, subtlest beast of all the field
"I knew, but not with human voice endued.
"Redouble then this miracle, and say,
"How camest thou speakable of mute; and how
"To me so friendly grown above the rest
"Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?
"Say, for such wonder claims attention due."
To whom the guileful tempter thus replied:
"Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve!
"Easy to me it is to tell thee all

" What thou commandst; and right thou shouldst be obeyed:
" I was at first as other beasts that graze
" The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
" As was my food; nor aught but food discerned,
" Or sex, and apprehended nothing high:
" Till, on a day, roving the field, I chanced
" A goodly tree far distant to behold
" Laden with fruit of fairest colours mixed,
" Ruddy and gold: I nearer drew to gaze;
" When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,
" Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense
" Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats
" Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at even,
" Unsucked of lamb or kid, that tend their play.
" To satisfy the sharp desire I had
" Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved
" Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once
" Powerful persuaders, quickened at the scent
" Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen.
" About the mossy trunk I wound me soon;
" For, high from ground, the branches would require
" Thy utmost reach, or Adam's: round the tree
" All other beasts that saw, with like desire
" Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
" Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung
" Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill
" I spared not; for such pleasure, till that hour,
" At feed, or fountain, never had I found.
" Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
" Strange alteration in me, to degree
" Of reason in my inward powers; and speech
" Wanted not long; though to this shape retained.
" Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
" I turned my thoughts, and, with capacious mind,
" Considered all things visible in Heaven,
" Or Earth, or middle—all things fair, and good:
" But all that fair, and good, in thy divine
" Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,
" United I beheld; no fair to thine
" Equivalent, or second! which compelled

" Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come
" And gaze, and worship thee, of right declared
" Sovran of creatures, universal dame!"
So talked the spirited sly snake; and Eve,
Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:
" Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
" The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved:
" But say, where grows the tree? from hence how far?
" For many are the trees of God that grow
" In Paradise, and various, yet unknown
" To us; in such abundance lies our choice,
" As leaves a greater store of fruit untouched,
" Still hanging incorruptible, till men
" Grow up to their provision, and more hands
" Help to disburden Nature of her birth."
To whom the wily adder blithe and glad:
" Empress! the way is ready, and not long;
" Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,
" Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past
" Of blowing myrrh and balm: if thou accept
" My conduct, I can bring thee hither soon."
" Lead then," said Eve. He, leading, swiftly rolled
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Brightens his crest. As when a wandering fire,
Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round,
Kindled through agitation to a flame,
(Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends,)
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,
There swallowed up and lost, from succour far:
So glistered the dire snake, and into fraud
Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree
Of prohibition, root of all our woe!
Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spake:
" Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,
" Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,
" The credit of whose virtue rest with thee;

" Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects!
" But of this tree we may not taste, nor touch;
" God so commanded, and left that command
" Sole daughter of his voice: the rest, we live
" Law to ourselves: our reason is our law."
To whom the tempter guilefully replied:
" Indeed! hath God then said that of the fruit
" Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat,
" Yet lords declared of all in earth or air?"
To whom thus Eve, yet sinless: " Of the fruit
" Of each tree in the garden we may eat,
" But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst
" The garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat
" Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.'"
She scarce had said, though brief, when now, more bold,
The tempter, but with show of zeal and love
To Man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on; and, as to passion moved,
Fluctuates disturbed, yet comely, and in act
Raised, as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some orator renowned,
In Athens, or free Rome, where eloquence
Flourished, since mute, to some great cause addressed,
Stood in himself collected, while each part,
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue,
Sometimes in height, began, as no delay
Of preface brooking, through his zeal of right;
So standing, moving, or to height upgrown,
The tempter, all impassioned thus began:
" O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving Plant,
" Mother of science? now I feel thy power
" Within me clear; not only to discern
" Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
" Of highest agents, deemed however wise.
" Queen of this universe! do not believe
" Those rigid threats of death: ye shall not die;
" How should you? By the fruit? it gives you life
" To knowledge; By the threatener? look on me—
" Me, who have touched and tasted; yet both live,
" And life more perfect have attained than fate

" Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
" Shall that be shut to man, which to the beast
" Is open? or will God incense his ire
" For such a petty trespass; and not praise
" Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
" Of death denounced, (whatever thing death be,)
" Deterred not from achieving what might lead
" To happier life—knowledge of good and evil?
" Of good, how just? of evil, (if what is evil
" Be real,) why not known, since easier shunned?
" God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just:
" Not just, not God—nor feared then, nor obeyed:
" Your fear itself of death removes the fear,
" Why then was this forbid? Why, but to awe?
" Why, but to keep ye low and ignorant,
" His worshippers? He knows, that in the day
" Ye eat thereof, your eyes, that seem so clear,—
" Yet are but dim,—shall perfectly be then
" Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as Gods,
" Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
" That ye shall be as Gods, since I as Man,
" Internal Man, is but proportion meet;
" I, of brute, human; ye, of human, Gods.
" So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
" Human, to put on Gods; death to be wished,
" Though threatened, which no worse than this can bring!
" And what are Gods, that Man may not become
" As they, participating godlike food?
" The Gods are first, and that advantage use
" On our belief, that all from them proceeds:
" I question it; for this fair earth I see,
" Warmed by the sun, producing every kind;
" Them, nothing: if they all things, who inclosed
" Knowledge of good and evil in this tree,
" That whoso eats thereof forthwith attains
" Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies
" The offence, that man should thus attain to know?
" What can your knoweldge hurt him, or this tree
" Impart against his will, if all be his!
" Or is it envy? and can envy dwell

" In heavenly breasts? These, these, and many more
" Causes, import your need of this fair fruit.
" Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste."
He ended; and his words, replete with guile,
Into her heart too easy entrance won:
Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregned
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth:
Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
An eager appetite, raised by the smell
So savoury of that fruit which, with desire,
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
Solicited her longing eye; yet first
Pausing awhile thus to herself she mused:
" Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits!
" (Though kept from Man,) and worthy to be admired;
" Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay
" Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
" The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise.
" Thy praise he also, who forbids thy use,
" Conceals not from us, naming thee the tree
" Of knowledge—knowledge both of good and evil,—
" Forbids us then to taste! but his forbidding
" Commends thee more, while it infers the good
" By thee communicated, and our want:
" For good unknown sure is not had; or, had
" And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
" In plain then, what forbids he but to know—
" Forbids us good—forbids us to be wise?
" Such prohibitions bind not. But if death
" Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
" Our inward freedom? In the day we eat
" Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die!
" How dies the serpent? he hath eaten and lives,
" And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
" Irrational till then! For us alone
" Was death invented? or to us denied
" This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?
" For beasts it seems: yet that one beast which first

" Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy
" The good befallen him—author unsuspect—
" Friendly to man—far from deceit or guile.
" What fear I then? rather, what know to fear
" Under this ignorance of good or evil—
" Of God, or death—of law, or penalty?
" Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,
" Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
" Of virtue to make wise! what hinders then
" To reach and feed at once both body and mind?"
So saying, her rash hand, in evil hour,
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked—she ate!
Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
That all was lost! Back to the thicket slunk
The guilty serpent; and well might; for Eve,
Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else
Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,
In fruit she never tasted; whether true
Or fancied so, through expectation high
Of knowledge: nor was godhead from her thought.
Greedily she engorged without restraint,
And knew not eating death! Satiate at length,
And heightened as with wine, jocund and boon,
Thus to herself she pleasingly began:
" O Sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees
" In Paradise! of operation blest
" To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed;
" And thy fair fruit let hang as to no end
" Created; but henceforth my early care,
" Not without song, each morning, and due praise,
" Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
" Of thy full branches offered free to all;
" Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature
" In knowledge, as the Gods, who all things know;
" Though others envy what they cannot give:
" For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here
" Thus grown. Experience, next, to thee I owe,
" Best guide! not following thee, I had remained
" In ignorance; thou openest wisdom's way

THE TEMPTATION.

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" And givest access, though secret she retire
" And I perhaps am secret; Heaven is high,
" High, and remote to see from thence distinct
" Each thing on Earth; and other care, perhaps,
" May have diverted from continual watch
" Our great Forbidder, safe with all his spies
" About him. But to Adam in what sort
" Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known
" As yet my change, and give him to partake
" Full happiness with me, or rather not,
" But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
" Without copartner? so to add what wants
" In female sex, the more to draw his love,
" And render me more equal; and perhaps,
" A thing not undesirable, sometime
" Superior; for, inferior, who is free?
" This may be well. But what if God have seen
" And death ensue? then I shall be no more!
" And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
" Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct;
" A death to think! Confirmed then I resolve,
" Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:
" So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
" I could endure; without him live no life."

So saying, from the tree her step she turned;
But first low reverence done, as to the Power
That dwelt within, whose presence had infused
Into the plant sciential sap, derived
From nectar, drink of Gods. Adam the while,
Waiting desirous her return, had wove
Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn
Her tresses, and her rural labours crown;
As reapers oft are wont their harvest queen.
Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new
Solace in her return, so long delayed.
Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill,
Misgave him; he the faltering measure felt;
And forth to meet her went, the way she took
That morn when first they parted: by the tree
Of knowledge he must pass; there he her met,

Scarce from the tree returning; in her hand
A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled,
New gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused.
To him she hasted: in her face excuse
Came prologue, and apology too prompt;
Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed:
"Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?
"Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived
"Thy presence; agony of love till now
"Not felt—nor shall be twice; for never more
"Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,
"The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
"Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear:
"This tree is not, as we are told, a tree
"Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
"Opening the way; but of divine effect
"To open eyes, and make them Gods who taste;
"And hath been tasted such: the serpent, wise,
"Or not restrained as we, or not obeying,
"Hath eaten of the fruit; and is become,
"Not dead, as we are threatened, but thenceforth
"Endued with human voice, and human sense;
"Reasoning to admiration! and with me
"Persuasively hath so prevailed, that I
"Have also tasted, and have also found
"The effects to correspond—opener mine eyes,
"Dim erst—dilated spirits—ampler heart—
"And growing up to godhead; which for thee
"Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.
"For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss;
"Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon.
"Thou therefore also taste, that equal lot
"May join us—equal joy, as equal love;
"Lest, thou not tasting, different degree
"Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
"Deity for thee, when fate will not permit."
Thus Eve, with countenance blithe, her story told;
But in her cheek distemper flushing glowed.
On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard
The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,

Astonied stood and blank! while horror chill
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed;
From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed:
Speechless he stood and pale; till thus, at length,
First to himself he inward silence broke:
"O fairest of creation! last and best
"Of all God's works! creature in whom excelled
"Whatever can, to sight or thought, be formed
"Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
"How art thou lost! how on a sudden lost,
"Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote!
"Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress
"The strict forbiddance, how to violate
"The sacred fruit forbidden! Some cursed fraud
"Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,
"And me with thee hath ruined; for with thee
"Certain my resolution is to die.
"How can I live without thee—how forego
"Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly joined,
"To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
"Should God create another Eve, and I
"Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
"Would never from my heart: no, no! I feel
"The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
"Bone of my bone, thou art; and from thy state
"Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe!"
So having said, as one from sad dismay
Recomforted, and, after thoughts disturbed,
Submitting to what seemed remediless,
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned:
"Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve!
"And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared,
"Had it been only coveting to eye
"That sacred fruit—sacred to abstinence;
"Much more to taste it, under ban to touch.
"But past who can recall, or done undo?
"Not God omnipotent, not fate: yet so
"Perhaps thou shalt not die; perhaps the fact
"Is not so heinous now,—foretasted fruit,—

" Profaned first by the serpent, by him first
" Made common, and unhallowed, ere our taste:
" Nor yet on him found deadly; he yet lives;
" Lives, as thou saidst, and gains to live, as Man,
" Higher degree of life: inducement strong
" To us, as likely, tasting, to attain
" Proportional ascent; which cannot be
" But to be Gods, or Angels—Demigods.
" Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
" Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy
" Us his prime creatures, dignified so high,
" Set over all his works; which, in our fall,
" For us created, needs with us must fail,
" Dependant made; so God shall uncreate—
" Be frustrate—do—undo, and labour lose;
" Not well conceived of God, who, though his power
" Creation could repeat, yet would be loth
" Us to abolish, lest the adversary
" Triumph, and say, 'Fickle their state, whom God
" Most favours! who can please him long? Me first
" He ruined, now mankind; whom will he next?'—
" Matter of scorn, not to be given the foe.
" However, I with thee have fixed my lot,
" Certain to undergo like doom: if death
" Consort with thee, death is to me as life;
" So forcible within my heart I feel
" The bond of nature draw me to my own—
" My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
" Our state cannot be severed; we are one—
" One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself."
So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied:
" O glorious trial of exceeding love,
" Illustrious evidence, example high!
" Engaging me to emulate; but, short
" Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
" Adam? from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
" And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
" One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof
" This day affords, declaring thee resolved,
" Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,

" Shall separate us linked in love so dear,
" To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
" If any be, of tasting this fair fruit;
" Whose virtue (for of good still good proceeds,
" Direct, or by occasion) hath presented
" This happy trial of thy love, which else
" So eminently never had been known.
" Were it I thought death menaced would ensue
" This my attempt, I would sustain alone
" The worst, and not persuade thee—rather die
" Deserted, than oblige thee with a fact
" Pernicious to thy peace: chiefly, assured
" Remarkably so late of thy so true,
" So faithful, love unequalled: but I feel
" Far otherwise the event; not death, but life
" Augmented—opened eyes—new hopes—new joys—
" Taste so divine, that what of sweet before
" Hath touched my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.
" On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
" And fear of death deliver to the winds."
So saying, she embraced him, and for joy
Tenderly wept; much won, that he his love
Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur
Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.
In recompense, (for such compliance bad
Such recompense best merits,) from the bough
She gave him of that fair, enticing fruit
With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat,
Against his better knowledge; not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan;
Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original! while Adam took no thought,
Eating his fill; nor Eve to iterate
Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe
Him with her loved society; that now,
As with new wine intoxicated both,
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel

Divinity within them, breeding wings
Wherewith to scorn the Earth. But that false fruit
Far other operation first displayed,
Carnal desire inflaming: he on Eve
Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him
As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn;
Till Adam thus gan Eve to dalliance move:
"Eve! now I see thou art exact of taste,
"And elegant:—of sapience no small part,
"Since to each meaning savour we apply,
"And palate call judicious:—I the praise
"Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purveyed.
"Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained
"From this delightful fruit, nor known till now
"True relish, tasting: if such pleasure be
"In things to us forbidden, it might be wished,
"For this one tree had been forbidden ten.
"But come, so well refreshed, now let us play,
"As meet is, after such delicious fare;
"For never did thy beauty, since the day
"I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned
"With all perfections, so inflame my sense
"With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
"Than ever; bounty of this virtuous tree!"
So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
Of amorous intent; well understood
Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
Her hand he seized; and to a shady bank,
Thick over-head with verdant roof embowered,
He led her nothing loth: flowers were the couch,
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
And hyacinth; earth's freshest, softest lap.
There they their fill of love and love's disport
Took largely—of their mutual guilt the seal—
The solace of their sin; till dewy sleep
Oppressed them, wearied with their amorous play.
Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
That with exhilarating vapour bland
About their spirits had played, and inmost powers
Made err, was now exhaled; and grosser sleep,

Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams
Encumbered, now had left them; up they rose
As from unrest; and, each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds
How darkened! Innocence, that, as a veil,
Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone:
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honour, from about them, naked left
To guilty Shame: he covered, but his robe
Uncovered more. So rose the Danite strong,
Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap
Of Philistéan Dalilah, and waked
Shorn of his strength; they, destitute and bare
Of all their virtue. Silent, and in face
Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute:
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed,
At length gave utterance to these words constrained:
" O Eve! in evil hour thou didst give ear
" To that false worm, of whomsoever taught
" To counterfeit Man's voice; true in our fall,
" False in our promised rising; since our eyes
" Opened we find indeed, and find we know
" Both good and evil—good lost, and evil got!
" Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,
" Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
" Of innocence, of faith, of purity—
" Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,
" And in our faces evident the signs
" Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store—
" Even shame, the last of evils: of the first
" Be sure then. How shall I behold the face
" Henceforth of God, or Angel, erst with joy
" And rapture so oft beheld? Those heavenly shapes
" Will dazzle now this earthly, with their blaze
" Insufferably bright. O might I here
" In solitude live savage; in some glade
" Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable
" To star, or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad
" And brown as evening! Cover me, ye pines!
" Ye cedars with innumerable boughs

" Hide me, where I may never see them more!
" But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
" What best may for the present serve to hide
" The parts of each from other, that seem most
" To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen;
" Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves together sewed,
" And girded on our loin, may cover round
" Those middle parts; that this new-comer, Shame,
" There sit not, and reproach us as unclean."
So counselled he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood: there soon they chose
The fig-tree, not that kind for fruit renowned;
But such as, at this day, to Indians known
In Malabar or Decan, spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother-tree, a pillared shade
High over-arched, and echoing walks between:
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade: those leaves
They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe;
And, with what skill they had, together sewed,
To gird their waist; vain covering, if to hide
Their guilt and dreaded shame! O how unlike
To that first naked glory! Such of late
Columbus found the American, so girt
With feathered cincture; naked else, and wild
Among the trees, on isles and woody shores.
Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,
They sat them down to weep; nor only tears
Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
Began to rise—high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord; and shook sore
Their inward state of mind—calm region once
And full of peace—now tost and turbulent!
For understanding ruled not, and the will
Heard not her lore; both in subjection now
To sensual appetite, who, from beneath,

Usurping, over sovran reason claimed
Superior sway. From thus distempered breast,
Adam, estranged in look and altered style
Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed:
" Would thou hadst hearkened to my words, and stayed
" With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
" Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,
" I know not whence, possessed thee! we had then
" Remained still happy: not, as now, despoiled
" Of all our good—shamed, naked, miserable!
" Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
" The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
" Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail."
To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus Eve:
" What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe!
" Imputest thou that to my default, or will
" Of wandering, as thou callst it, which who knows
" But might as ill have happened, thou being by,
" Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,
" Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discerned
" Fraud in the serpent, speaking as he spake;
" No ground of enmity between us known,
" Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm.
" Was I to have never parted from thy side?
" As good have grown there still a lifeless rib.
" Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
" Command me absolutely not to go,
" Going into such danger, as thou saidst?
" Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay;
" Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
" Hadst thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent
" Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me."
To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied:
" Is this the love, is this the recompense
" Of mine to thee, ungrateful Eve! expressed
" Immutable, when thou wert lost, not I;
" Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss,
" Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?
" And am I now upbraided as the cause
" Of thy transgressing? not enough severe,

" It seems, in thy restraint. What could I more?
" I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold
" The danger and the lurking enemy
" That lay in wait; beyond this, had been force;
" And force upon free will hath here no place.
" But confidence then bore thee on, secure
" Either to meet no danger, or to find
" Matter of glorious trial: and perhaps
" I also erred, in overmuch admiring
" What seemed in thee so perfect, that I thought
" Nor evil durst attempt thee; but I rue
" That error now, which is become my crime,
" And thou the accuser? Thus it shall befall
" Him, who, to worth in woman overtrusting,
" Lets her will rule: restraint she will not brook;
" And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
" She first his weak indulgence will accuse."
Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;
And of their vain contést appeared no end.

Tenth Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

MAN'S transgression known; the guardian Angels forsake Paradise, and return up to Heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved; God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors; who descends and gives sentence accordingly; then in pity clothes them both, and reascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at the gates of Hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new world, and the sin by Man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in Hell, but to follow Satan their sire up to the place of Man: to make the way easier from Hell to this world to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan had made; then, preparing for Earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to Hell; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium; in full assembly relates with boasting his success against Man; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed with himself also suddenly into serpents according to his doom given in Paradise; then, deluded with a show of the forbidden tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take of the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death; God fortells the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things; but, for the present, commands his Angels to make several alterations in the heavens and elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails; rejects the condolement of Eve; she persists, and at length appeases him: then, to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways, which he approves not; but, conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the serpent; and exhorts her with him to seek peace of the offended Deity by repentance and supplication.

MEANWHILE the heinous and despiteful act
Of Satan done in Paradise, and how
He, in the serpent, had perverted Eve,
Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,

Was known in Heaven; for what can scape the eye
Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart
Omniscient? who, in all things wise and just,
Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind
Of Man, with strength entire, and free-will armed,
Complete to have discovered, and repulsed,
Whatever wiles of foe, or seeming friend.
For still they knew, and ought to have still remembered,
The high injunction—not to taste that fruit,
Whoever tempted; which they not obeying
Incurred, (what could they less?) the penalty;
And, manifold in sin, deserved to fall.
Up into Heaven, from Paradise, in haste
The angelic guards ascended, mute, and sad
For Man; for of his state by this they knew,
Much wondering how the subtle fiend had stolen
Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news
From Earth arrived at Heaven-gate, displeased
All were who heard; dim sadness did not spare
That time celestial visages, yet, mixed
With pity, violated not their bliss.
About the new arrived, in multitudes
The ethereal people ran, to hear and know
How all befell: they towards the throne supreme,
Accountable, made haste, to make appear,
With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,
And easily approved; when the Most High
Eternal Father, from his secret cloud
Amidst, in thunder uttered thus his voice:
"Assembled angels, and ye Powers returned
"From unsuccessful charge! be not dismayed,
"Nor troubled at these tidings from the Earth,
"Which your sincerest care could not prevent,
"Foretold so lately what would come to pass,
"When first the tempter crossed the gulf from Hell
"I told ye then he should prevail, and speed
"On his bad errand; man shall be seduced,
"And flattered out of all, believing lies
"Against his Maker; no decree of mine
"Concurring, to necessitate his fall,

" Or touch with lightest moment of impulse
" His free will, to her own inclining left
" In even scale. But fallen he is; and now
" What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass
" On his transgression—death denounced that day?
" Which he presumes already vain and void,
" Because not yet inflicted, as he feared,
" By some immediate stroke; but soon shall find
" Forbearance no acquittance, ere day end.
" Justice shall not return, as bounty, scorned.
" But whom send I to judge them? Whom but thee,
" Vicegerent Son? To thee I have transferred
" All judgment, whether in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell.
" Easy it may be seen that I intend
" Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee,
" Man's friend, his Mediator—his designed
" Both ransom and Redeemer voluntary;
" And destined Man himself, to judge Man fallen."
So spake the Father; and, unfolding bright
Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son
Blazed forth unclouded Deity: he, full
Resplendent, all his Father manifest
Expressed, and thus divinely answered mild:
" Father Eternal! thine is to decree;
" Mine, both in Heaven and Earth to do thy will
" Supreme; that thou in me, thy Son beloved,
" Mayst ever rest well pleased. I go to judge
" On Earth these thy transgressors; but thou knowst,
" Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,
" When time shall be; for so I undertook
" Before thee; and, not repenting, this obtain
" Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
" On me derived: yet I shall temper so
" Justice with mercy, as may illustrate most
" Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.
" Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none
" Are to behold the judgment, but the judged—
" Those two; the third, best absent, is condemned,
" Convict by flight, and rebel to all law:
" Conviction to the serpent none belongs."

ADAM AND EVE.

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" O Heaven! in evil strait this day I stand
" Before my Judge; either to undergo
" Myself the total crime, or to accuse
" My other self, the partner of my life;
" Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,
" I should conceal, and not expose to blame
" By my complaint: but strict necessity
" Subdues me, and calamitous constraint;
" Lest on my head both sin and punishment,
" However insupportable, be all
" Devolved; though, should I hold my peace, yet thou
" Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.
" This woman, whom thou madest to be my help,
" And gavest me as a perfect gift—so good—
" So fit—so acceptable—so divine,
" That from her hand I could suspect no ill;
" And what she did—whatever in itself—
" Her doing seemed to justify the deed;
" She gave me of the tree, and I did eat."
To whom the Sovran Presence thus replied:
" Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
" Before his voice? or was she made thy guide,
" Superior, or but equal, that to her
" Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
" Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee,
" And for thee, whose perfection far excelled
" Hers in all real dignity? Adorned
" She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
" Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts
" Were such, as under government well seemed—
" Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part
" And person, hadst thou known thyself aright."
So having said, he thus to Eve in few:
" Say, woman, what is this which thou hast done?"
To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelmed,
Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge
Bold or loquacious, thus abashed replied:
" The serpent me beguiled, and I did eat!"
Which, when the Lord God heard, without delay
To judgment he proceeded on the accused

Serpent, though brute; unable to transfer
The guilt on him who made him instrument
Of mischief, and polluted from the end
Of his creation: justly then accursed
As vitiated in nature: more to know
Concerned not man (since he no further knew),
Nor altered his offence; yet God at last
To Satan, first in sin, his doom applied;
Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best:
And on the serpent thus his curse let fall:
" Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed
" Above all cattle, each beast of the field;
" Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,
" And dust shall eat all the days of thy life.
" Between thee and the Woman I will put
" Enmity; and between thine and her seed:
" Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel."
So spake this oracle, then verified,
When Jesus, Son of Mary, second Eve,
Saw Satan fall, like lightning, down from Heaven,
Prince of the air; then, rising from his grave,
Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed
In open show; and, with ascension bright,
Captivity led captive through the air,
The realm itself of Satan, long usurped;
Whom he shall tread at last under our feet;
Even he, who now foretold his fatal bruise;
And to the woman thus his sentence turned:
" Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
" By thy conception; children thou shalt bring
" In sorrow forth; and to thy husband's will
" Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule."
On Adam last thus judgment he pronounced:
" Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife,
" And eaten of the tree, concerning which
" I charged thee, saying, 'Thou shalt not eat thereof;'
" Cursed is the ground for thy sake: thou in sorrow
" Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life;
" Thorns also, and thistles, it shall bring thee forth
" Unbid; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field:

" In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,
" Till thou return unto the ground; for thou
" Out of the ground wast taken; know thy birth!
" For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return."
So judged he Man, both Judge and Saviour sent;
And the instant stroke of death, denounced that day,
Removed far off: then, pitying how they stood
Before him naked to the air, that now
Must suffer change, disdained not to begin
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume,
As when he washed his servants' feet; so now,
As father of his family, he clad
Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,
Or, as the snake, with youthful coat repaid;
And thought not much to clothe his enemies:
Nor he their outward only, with the skins
Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness
Arraying, covered from his Father's sight.
To him with swift ascent he up returned,
Into his blissful bosom reassumed
In glory, as of old—to him appeased,
All, though all-knowing, what had passed with man
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.
Meanwhile, ere thus was sinned and judged on earth,
Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,
In counterview within the gates, that now
Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame
Far into Chaos, since the fiend passed through,
Sin opening; who thus now to Death began:
" O son! why sit we here each other viewing
" Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives
" In other worlds, and happier seat provides
" For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be
" But that success attends him: if mishap,
" Ere this he had returned, with fury driven
" By his avengers; since no place like this
" Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.
" Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
" Wings growing, and dominion given me large,

" Beyond this deep; whatever draws me on,
" Or sympathy, or some connatural force,
" Powerful at greatest distance to unite,
" With secret amity, things of like kind,
" By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade
" Inseparable, must with me along;
" For Death from Sin no power can separate.
" But, lest the difficulty of passing back
" Stay his return, perhaps, over this gulf
" Impassable—impervious, let us try
" Adventurous work, yet to thy power and mine
" Not unagreeable—to found a path
" Over this main from Hell to that new world,
" Where Satan now prevails—a monument
" Of merit high to all the infernal host,
" Easing their passage hence, for intercourse,
" Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
" Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
" By this new felt attraction and instinct."
Whom thus the meagre shadow answered soon:
" Go, whither fate, and inclination strong,
" Leads thee; I shall not lag behind, nor err
" The way, thou leading; such a scent I draw
" Of carnage, prey innumerable! and taste
" The savour of death from all things there that live:
" Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest
" Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid."
So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell
Of mortal change on earth. As when a flock
Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,
Against the day of battle, to a field
Where armies lie encamped, come flying, lured
With scent of living carcasses designed
For death, the following day, in bloody fight:
So scented the grim feature, and upturned
His nostril wide into the murky air;
Sagacious of his quarry from so far.
Then both from out Hell-gates, into the waste
Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,
Flew diverse; and with power (their power was great)

Hovering upon the waters, what they met
Solid or slimy (as in raging sea
Tost up and down), together crowded drove,
From each side shoaling towards the mouth of Hell:
As when two polar winds, blowing adverse
Upon the Cronian sea, together drive
Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way
Beyond Petsora eastward, to the rich
Cathaian coast. The aggregated soil
Death, with his mace petrific, cold, and dry,
As with a trident, smote, and fixed as firm
As Delos, floating once: the rest his look
Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move;
And with asphaltic slime, broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach
They fastened; and the mole immense wrought on,
Over the foaming deep high arched, a bridge
Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
Immoveable of this now fenceless world,
Forfeit to Death; from hence a passage broad,
Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell.
So, if great things to small may be compared,
Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,
From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,
Came to the sea; and, over Hellespont
Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined,
And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves.
Now had they brought the work,—by wondrous art
Pontifical,—a ridge of pendent rock,
Over the vexed abyss (following the track
Of Satan to the self-same place where he
First lighted from his wing, and landed safe
From out of Chaos), to the outside bare
Of this round world: with pins of adamant
And chains they made all fast—too fast they made
And durable! And now in little space
The confines meet of empryéan Heaven,
And of this world; and, on the left hand, Hell
With long reach interposed; three several ways,
In sight, to each of these three places led.

And now their way to Earth they had descried,
To Paradise first tending; when, behold
Satan, in likeness of an Angel bright,
Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering
His zenith, while the sun in Aries rose:
Disguised he came; but those his children dear
Their parent soon discerned, though in disguise.
He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk
Into the wood fast by; and, changing shape
To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act
By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded
Upon her husband—saw their shame that sought
Vain overtures: but when he saw descend
The Son of God to judge them, terrified
He fled; not hoping to escape, but shun
The present; fearing, guilty, what his wrath
Might suddenly inflict; that past, returned
By night, and listening where the hapless pair
Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,
Thence gathered his own doom; which understood
Not instant, but of future time, with joy
And tidings fraught, to Hell he now returned;
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhoped
Met, who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight
Of that stupendous bridge his joy increased.
Long he admiring stood; till Sin, his fair,
Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke:
"O parent! these are thy magnific deeds—
"Thy trophies! which thou viewst as not thine own:
"Thou art their author and prime architect:
"For I no sooner in my heart divined
"(My heart, which by a secret harmony
"Still moves with thine, joined in connection sweet)
"That thou on earth hadst prospered, which thy looks
"Now also evidence, but straight I felt,
"Though distant from the world's between—yet felt
"That I must after thee, with this thy son;
"Such fatal consequence unites us three.

" Hell could no longer hold us in her bounds,
" Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure
" Detain from following thy illustrious track:
" Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined
" Within Hell-gates till now; thou us empowered
" To fortify thus far, and overlay,
" With this portentous bridge, the dark abyss.
" Thine now is all this world; thy virtue hath won
" What thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gained,
" With odds, what war hath lost; and fully avenged
" Our foil in Heaven; here thou shalt monarch reign—
" There didst not: there let him still victor sway
" As battle hath adjudged—from this new world
" Retiring, by his own doom alienated;
" And henceforth monarchy with thee divide
" Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,
" His quadrature, from thy orbicular world;
" Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne."
Whom thus the Prince of Darkness answered glad:
" Fair daughter! and thou son and grandchild both!
" High proof ye now have given to be the race
" Of Satan (for I glory in the name,
" Antagonist of Heaven's Almighty King);
" Amply have merited of me, of all
" The infernal empire, that, so near Heaven's door,
" Triumphal with triumphal act have met,
" Mine, with this glorious work; and made one realm,
" Hell and this world—one realm, one continent
" Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore, while I
" Descend through darkness, on your road with ease,
" To my associate Powers, them to acquaint
" With these successes, and with them rejoice,
" You two this way, among these numerous orbs,
" All yours, right down to Paradise descend;
" There dwell, and reign in bliss; thence on the Earth
" Dominion exercise and in the air,
" Chiefly on Man, sole lord of all declared:
" Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.
" My substitutes I send ye, and create
" Plenipotent on earth, of matchless might

" Issuing from me; on your joint vigour now
" My hold of this new kingdom all depends,
" Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.
" If your joint power prevail, the affairs of Hell
" No detriment need fear. Go, and be strong!"
So saying, he dismissed them; they with speed
Their course through thickest constellations held,
Spreading their bane; the blasted stars looked wan;
And planets, planet-struck, real eclipse
Then suffered. The other way Satan went down
The causey to Hell-gate: on either side
Disparted Chaos, overbuilt, exclaimed,
And with rebounding surge the bars assailed
That scorned his indignation: through the gate,
Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,
And all about found desolate; for those,
Appointed to sit there, had left their charge,
Flown to the upper world; the rest were all
Far to the inland retired, about the walls
Of Pandemonium—city and proud seat
Of Lucifer, so by allusion called
Of that bright star to Satan paragoned:
There kept their watch the legions, while the grand
In council sat, solicitous what chance
Might intercept their emperor sent; so he
Departing gave command, and they observed.
As when the Tartar from his Russian foe,
By Astracan, over the snowy plains,
Retires; or Bactrian Sophi, from the horns
Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
The realm of Aladule, in his retreat
To Tauris or Casbeen: so these, the late
Heaven-banished host, left desert utmost Hell
Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch
Round their metropolis; and now expecting,
Each hour, their great adventurer, from the search
Of foreign worlds: he through the midst, unmarked,
In show plebeian Angel militant
Of lowest order, passed; and from the door
Of that Plutonian hall, invisible

Ascended his high throne; which, under state
Of richest texture spread, at the upper end
Was placed in regal lustre. Down awhile
He sat, and round about him saw, unseen:
At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head,
And shape star-bright, appeared, or brighter; clad
With what permissive glory since his fall
Was left him, or false glitter. All amazed
At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng
Bent their aspect, and whom they wished beheld—
Their mighty chief returned. Loud was the acclaim;
Forth rushed in haste the great consulting peers,
Raised from their dark divan, and with like joy
Congratulant approached him; who with hand,
Silence, and with these words attention won:
"Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers!
"For in possession such, not only of right,
"I call ye, and declare ye now; returned
"Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
"Triumphant out of this infernal pit
"Abominable—accursed—the house of woe—
"And dungeon of our tyrant: now possess,
"As lords, a spacious world, to our native Heaven
"Little inferior, by my adventure hard
"With peril great achieved. Long were to tell
"What I have done—what suffered; with what pain
"Voyaged the unreal, vast, unbounded deep
"Of horrible confusion; over which,
"By Sin and Death, a broad way now is paved
"To expedite your glorious march; but I
"Toiled out my uncouth passage, forced to ride
"The untractable abyss, plunged in the womb
"Of unoriginal Night, and Chaos wild;
"That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed
"My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
"Protesting Fate supreme; thence how I found
"The new-created world, which fame in Heaven
"Long had foretold—a fabric wonderful
"Of absolute perfection! therein Man
"Placed in a Paradise, by our exile

" Made happy! Him by fraud I have seduced
" From his Creator; and, the more to increase
" Your wonder, with an apple! He, thereat
" Offended, (worth your laughter!) hath given up
" Both his beloved Man, and all his world,
" To Sin and Death a prey; and so to us,
" Without our hazard, labour, or alarm,
" To range in, and to dwell, and over Man
" To rule, as over all he should have ruled.
" True is, me also he hath judged; or rather
" Me not, but the brute serpent, in whose shape
" Man I deceived: that which to me belongs
" Is enmity, which he will put between
" Me and mankind; I am to bruise his heel;
" His seed, (when is not set,) shall bruise my head.
" A world who would not purchase with a bruise,
" Or much more grievous pain? Ye have the account
" Of my performance: what remains, ye Gods!
" But up, and enter now into full bliss?"
So having said, awhile he stood, expecting
Their universal shout, and high applause,
To fill his ear: when, contrary, he hears
On all sides, from innumerable tongues,
A dismal universal hiss!—the sound
Of public scorn: He wondered, but not long
Had leisure, wondering at himself now more:
His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare;
His arms clung to his ribs; his legs entwining
Each other, till, supplanted, down he fell
A monstrous serpent, on his belly prone,
Reluctant; but in vain! a greater Power
Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,
According to his doom. He would have spoke;
But hiss for hiss returned with forkèd tongue
To forkèd tongue; for now were all transformed
Alike, to serpents all, as accessories
To his bold riot: dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarming now
With complicated monsters, head and tail,
Scorpion, and asp, and amphisbæna dire,

Cerastes horned, hydrus, and elops drear,
And dispas (not so thick swarmed once the soil
Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the isle
Ophiusa): but still greatest he, the midst,
Now dragon grown, larger than whom the sun
Ingendered in the Pythian vale on slime—
Huge Python; and his power no less he seemed
Above the rest still to retain. They all
Him followed, issuing forth to the open field,
Where all yet left of that revolted rout,
Heaven-fallen, in station stood, or just array;
Sublime with expectation when to see
In triumph issuing forth their glorious chief.
They saw, but other sight instead—a crowd
Of ugly serpents! horror on them fell,
And horrid sympathy; for, what they saw,
They felt themselves now changing: down their arms—
Down fell both spear and shield—down they as fast;
And the dire hiss renewed, and the dire form
Catched by contagion; like in punishment,
As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant
Turned to exploding hiss—triumph to shame,
Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood
A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,
(His will who reigns above!) to aggravate
Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that
Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve
Used by the tempter: on that prospect strange
Their earnest eyes they fixed, imagining
For one forbidden tree a multitude
Now risen, to work them farther woe or shame;
Yet, parched with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain;
But on they rolled in heaps, and, up the trees
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
That curled Megæra. Greedily they plucked
The fruitage, fair to sight like that which grew
Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed;
This more delusive, not the touch, but taste
Deceived: they, fondly thinking to allay

Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
Chewed bitter ashes, which the offended taste
With spattering noise rejected: oft they assayed,
Hunger and thirst constraining; drugged as oft,
With hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws,
With soot and cinders filled; so oft they fell
Into the same illusion, not as Man
Whom they triúmphed—once lapsed. Thus were they plagued;
And, worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,
Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed:
Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo
This annual humbling certain numbered days,
To dash their pride, and joy, for Man seduced.
However, some tradition they dispersed
Among the heathen of their purchase got;
And fabled how the serpent, whom they called
Ophion, with Eurynome (the wide-
Encroaching Eve perhaps), had first the rule
Of high Olympus; thence by Saturn driven
And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.
  Meanwhile, in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived: Sin there in power before,
Once actual; now in body, and to dwell
Habitual habitant; behind her Death,
Close following, pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse, to whom Sin thus begun:
  "Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death!
"What thinkst thou of our empire now, though earned
"With travail difficult? not better far,
"Than still at Hell's dark threshold to have sat watch,
"Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half-starved?"
  Whom thus the sin-born monster answered soon:
  "To me, who with eternal famine pine,
"Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven;
"There best, where most with ravin I may meet:
"Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems
"To stuff this maw—this vast unhidebound corpse."
  To whom the incestuous mother thus replied:
"Thou therefore on these herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
"Feed first; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl—

" No homely morsels : And whatever thing
" The scythe of Time mows down, devour unspared ;
" Till I, in man residing, through the race,
" His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect ;
" And season him thy last and sweetest prey."
This said, they both betook them several ways,
Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
All kinds, and for destruction to mature
Sooner or later ; which the Almighty seeing,
From his transcendant seat the saints among,
To those bright orders uttered thus his voice :
" See ! with what heat these dogs of Hell advance
" To waste and havoc yonder world, which I
" So fair and good created ! and had still
" Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man
" Let in these wasteful furies, who impute
" Folly to me ; so doth the Prince of Hell
" And his adherents, that, with so much ease,
" I suffer them to enter and possess
" A place so heavenly ; and, conniving, seem
" To gratify my scornful enemies,
" That laugh, as if, transported with some fit
" Of passion, I to them had quitted all,
" At random yielded up to their misrule ;
" And know not that I called, and drew them thither,
" My hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth
" Which Man's polluting sin, with taint, hath shed
" On what was pure ; till, crammed and gorged, nigh burst
" With sucked and glutted offal, at one sling
" Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,
" Both Sin, and Death, and yawning grave, at last,
" Through Chaos hurled, obstruct the mouth of Hell
" For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.
" Then Heaven and Earth, renewed, shall be made pure
" To sanctify, that shall receive no stain :
" Till then, the curse pronounced on both precedes."
He ended, and the heavenly audience loud
Sung Halleluiah, as the sound of seas,
Through multitude that sung : " Just are thy ways,
" Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works :

" Who can extenuate thee?" Next, to the Son,
" Destined Restorer of mankind, by whom
" New Heaven and Earth shall to the ages rise,
" Or down from Heaven descend."
Such was their song;
While the Creator, calling forth by name
His mighty angels, gave them several charge,
As sorted best with present things. The Sun
Had first his precept so to move, so shine,
As might affect the Earth with cold and heat
Scarce tolerable; and from the north to call
Decrepit winter; from the south to bring
Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc Moon
Her office they prescribed; to the other five
Their planetary motions, and aspects,
In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
In synod unbenign: and taught the fixed
Their influence malignant when to shower;
Which of them rising with the Sun, or falling,
Should prove tempestuous. To the winds they set
Their corners; when with bluster to confound
Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll
With terror through the dark aërial hall.
Some say, he bid his Angels turn askance
The poles of Earth, twice ten degrees and more,
From the Sun's axle; they with labour pushed
Oblique the centric globe; some say, the Sun
Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road
Like-distant breadth to Taurus, with the seven
Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,
Up to the tropic Crab: thence down amain
By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,
As deep as Capricorn; to bring in change
Of seasons to each clime: else had the spring
Perpetual smiled on earth with vernant flowers,
Equal in days and nights, except to those
Beyond the polar circles; to them day
Had unbenighted shone; while the low Sun,
To recompense his distance, in their sight

Had rounded still the horizon, and not known
Or east or west; which had forbid the snow
From cold Estotiland, and south as far
Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit,
The Sun, as from Thyéstean banquet turned
His course intended; else, how had the world
Inhabited, though sinless, more than now,
Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
These changes in the Heavens, though slow, produced
Like change on sea and land; sideral blast,
Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot
Corrupt and pestilent: now, from the north
Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shore,
Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice,
And snow, and hail, and stormy gust, and flaw,
Boreas, and Cæcias, and Argestes loud,
And Thrascias, rend the woods, and seas upturn;
With adverse blast upturns them from the south
Notus, and Afer, black with thunderous clouds
From Serraliona: thwart of these, as fierce,
Forth rush the Levant, and the Ponent winds,
Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,
Sirocco and Libecchio. Thus began
Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first,
Daughter of Sin, among the irrational
Death introduced, through fierce antipathy:
Beast now with beast gan gar, and fowl with fowl,
And fish with fish: to graze the herb all leaving
Devoured each other; nor stood much in awe
Of Man, but fled him; or, with countenance grim,
Glared on him passing. These were, from without,
The growing miseries, which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandoned; but worse felt within;
And, in a troubled sea of passion tost,
Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint:
"O miserable of happy! is this the end
"Of this new glorious world, and me so late
"The glory of that glory, who now, become
"Accursed of blessèd, hide me from the face

" Of God, whom to behold was then my height
" Of happiness! Yet well, if here would end
" The misery! I deserved it, and would bear
" My own deservings; but this will not serve:
" All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
" Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard
" Delightfully, 'Increase and multiply;'
" Now death to hear! for what can I increase
" Or multiply, but curses on my head?
" Who, of all ages to succeed, but, feeling
" The evil on him brought by me, will curse
" My head? 'Ill fare our ancestor impure!
" For this we may thank Adam!' but his thanks
" Shall be the execration. So, besides
" Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
" Shall with a fierce reflux on me rebound—
" On me, as on their natural centre, light
" Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys
" Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!
" Did I request thee, Maker! from my clay
" To mould me man? Did I solicit thee
" From darkness to promote me, or here place
" In this delicious garden? As my will
" Concurred not to my being, it were but right
" And equal to reduce me to my dust—
" Desirous to resign and render back
" All I received—unable to perform
" Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
" The good I sought not. To the loss of that
" (Sufficient penalty!) why hast thou added
" The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
" Thy justice seems! yet, to say truth, too late
" I thus contest; then should have been refused
" Those terms, whatever, when they were proposed:
" Thou didst accept them; wilt thou enjoy the good,
" Then cavil the conditions? And, though God
" Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son
" Prove disobedient, and, reproved, retort,
" 'Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not!'
" Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee

" That proud excuse? yet him not thy election
" But natural necessity, begot.
" God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
" To serve him; thy reward was of his grace;
" Thy punishment then justly is at his will.
" Be it so, for I submit; his doom is fair,
" That dust I am, and shall to dust return:
" O welcome hour whenever! Why delays
" His hand to execute what his decree
" Fixed on this day? Why do I overlive?
" Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out
" To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet
" Mortality—my sentence, and be earth
" Insensible! How glad would lay me down,
" As in my mother's lap! There I should rest,
" And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more
" Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse
" To me, and to my offspring, would torment me
" With cruel expectation! Yet one doubt
" Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die;
" Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of Man
" Which God inspired, cannot together perish
" With this corporeal clod: then, in the grave,
" Or in some other dismal place, who knows
" But I shall die a living death? O thought
" Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath
" Of life that sinned; what dies, but what had life
" And sin? The body properly hath neither.
" All of me then shall die: let this appease
" The doubt, since human reach no farther knows:
" For, though the Lord of all be infinite,
" Is his wrath also? Be it, Man is not so,
" But mortal doomed. How can he exercise
" Wrath without end on Man, whom death must end?
" Can he make deathless death? That were to make
" Strange contradiction, which to God himself
" Impossible is held, as argument
" Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,
" For anger's sake, finite to infinite,
" In punished man, to satisfy his rigour,

" Satisfied never? That were to extend
" His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law,
" By which all causes else, according still
" To the reception of their matter, act;
" Not to the extent of their own sphere. But say
" That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,
" Bereaving sense; but endless misery
" From this day onward, which I feel begun
" Both in me, and without me, and so last
" To perpetuity: ay me! that fear
" Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution
" On my defenceless head; both death and I
" Am found eternal, and incorporate both:
" Nor I on my part single; in me all
" Posterity stands cursed: fair patrimony
" That I must leave ye, sons! O, were I able
" To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!
" So disinherited, how would you bless
" Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all mankind,
" For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemned?—
" If guiltless—But from me what can proceed,
" But all corrupt; both mind and will depraved,
" Not to do only, but to will the same
" With me? How can they then acquitted stand
" In sight of God? Him, after all disputes,
" Forced I absolve: all my evasions vain,
" And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still
" But to my own conviction: first and last
" On me—me only, as the source and spring
" Of all corruption, all the blame lights due;
" So might the wrath! Fond wish! couldst thou support
" That burden, heavier than the earth to bear—
" Than all the world much heavier, though divided
" With that bad woman? Thus, what thou desirest,
" And what thou fearest, alike destroys all hope
" Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
" Beyond all past example and future:
" To Satan only like, both crime and doom.
" O conscience! into what abyss of fears
" And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which

" I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged!"
Thus Adam to himself lamented loud
Through the still night; not now, as ere man fell,
Wholesome, and cool, and mild, but with black air
Accompanied, with damps, and dreadful gloom;
Which to his evil conscience represented
All things with double terror. On the ground
Outstretched he lay—on the cold ground; and oft
Cursed his creation; Death as oft accused
Of tardy execution, since denounced
The day of his offence. " Why comes not Death,"
Said he, " with one thrice-acceptable stroke
" To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,
" Justice divine not hasten to be just?
" But Death comes not at call; Justice divine
" Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.
" O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers!
" With other echo late I taught your shades
" To answer, and resound far other song."
Whom, thus afflicted, when sad Eve beheld,
Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,
Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed;
But her, with stern regard, he thus repelled:
" Out of my sight, thou serpent! That name best
" Befits thee, with him leagued, thyself as false
" And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,
" Like his, and colour serpentine, may show
" Thy inward fraud; to warn all creatures from thee
" Henceforth; lest that too heavenly form, pretended
" To hellish falsehood, snare them! But for thee
" I had persisted happy: had not thy pride
" And wandering vanity, when least was safe,
" Rejected my forewarning, and disdained
" Not to be trusted—longing to be seen,
" Though by the Devil himself, him overweening
" To overreach; but with the serpent meeting
" Fooled and beguiled—by him thou, I by thee,
" To trust thee from my side; imagined wise,
" Constant, mature, proof against all assaults;
" And understood not all was but a show,

" Rather than solid virtue; all but a rib
" Crooked by nature, bent (as now appears),
" More to the part sinister, from me drawn;
" Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
" To my just number found! Oh! why did God,
" Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven
" With spirits masculine, create at last
" This novelty on Earth, this fair defect
" Of nature?—and not fill the world at once
" With Men, as Angels, without feminine?
" Or find some other way to generate
" Mankind? This mischief had not then befallen,
" And more that shall befall—innumerable
" Disturbances on Earth through female snares,
" And strait conjunction with this sex: for either
" He never shall find out fit mate, but such
" As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;
" Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,
" Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained
" By a far worse; or, if she love, withheld
" By parents; or his happiest choice too late
" Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound
" To a fell adversary, his hate, or shame:
" Which infinite calamity shall cause
" To human life, and household peace confound."
He added not, and from her turned; but Eve,
Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing,
And tresses all disordered, at his feet
Fell humble; and, embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint:
" Forsake me not thus, Adam! Witness, Heaven,
" What love sincere, and reverence, in my heart
" I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
" Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant
" I beg and clasp thy knees: bereave me not
" Whereon I live,—thy gentle looks, thy aid,
" Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress!
" My only strength, and stay! forlorn of thee,
" Whither shall I betake me? where subsist?
" While yet we live—scarce one short hour perhaps,—

" Between us two let there be peace—both joining—
" As joined in injuries—one enmity
" Against a foe by doom express assigned us,
" That cruel serpent! on me exércise not
" Thy hatred for this misery befallen—
" On me already lost—me than thyself
" More miserable! both have sinned; but thou
" Against God only, I against God and thee:
" And to the place of judgment will return;
" There with my cries impórtune Heaven, that all
" The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
" On me—sole cause to thee of all this woe—
" Me—only me—just object of his ire!"
She ended weeping; and her lowly plight,
Immoveable, till peace obtained from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commiseration: soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress!
Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking—
His counsel, whom she had displeased—his aid!
As one disarmed his anger all he lost;
And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon:
" Unwary, and too desirous (as before,
" So now) of what thou knowst not, who desirest
" The punishment all on thyself! alas!
" Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain
" His full wrath, whose thou feelst as yet least part,
" And my displeasure bearst so ill. If prayers
" Could alter high decrees, I to that place
" Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
" That on my head all might be visited;
" Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
" To me committed, and by me exposed,
" But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame
" Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive
" In offices of love, how we may lighten
" Each other's burden, in our share of woe;
" Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see,
" Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil:

" A long day's dying, to augment our pain;
" And to our seed, (O hapless seed!) derived."
To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied:
" Adam! by sad experiment I know
" How little weight my words with thee can find,
" Found so erroneous; thence by just event
" Found so unfortunate! nevertheless,
" Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place
" Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
" Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart,
" Living or dying, from thee I will not hide
" What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,
" Tending to some relief of our extremes,
" Or end—though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
" As in our evils, and of easier choice.
" If care of our descent perplex us most,
" Which must be born to certain woe, devoured
" By Death at last; (and miserable it is,
" To be to others cause of misery,
" Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
" Into this cursed world a woful race,
" That after wretched life must be at last
" Food for so foul a monster;) in thy power
" It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent
" The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
" Childless thou art; childless remain: so Death
" Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two
" Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.
" But if thou judge it hard and difficult,
" Conversing—looking—loving, to abstain
" From love's due rites—nuptial embraces sweet,
" And with desire to languish without hope,
" Before the present object languishing
" With like desire; which would be misery
" And torment less than none of what we dread;
" Then, both ourselves and seed at once to free
" From what we fear for both, let us make short—
" Let us seek Death; or, he not found, supply
' With our own hands, his office on ourselves.
' Why stand we longer shivering under fears

" That show no end but death, and have the power,
" Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
" Destruction with destruction to destroy?"
She ended here, or vehement despair
Broke off the rest: so much of death her thoughts
Had entertained, as dyed her cheeks with pale.
But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed,
To better hopes his more attentive mind
Labouring had raised; and thus to Eve replied:
" Eve! thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
" To argue in thee something more sublime
" And excellent, than what thy mind contemns:
" But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes
" That excellence thought in thee; and implies,
" Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
" For loss of life and pleasure overloved.
" Or if thou covet death, as utmost end
" Of misery, so thinking to evade
" The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God
" Hath wiselier armed his vengeful ire, than so
" To be forestalled; much more I fear lest death,
" So snatched, will not exempt us from the pain
" We are by doom to pay; rather, such acts
" Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
" To make death in us live. Then let us seek
" Some safer resolution, which methinks
" I have in view, calling to mind with heed
" Part of our sentence, that 'Thy seed shall bruise
" 'The serpent's head.' Piteous amends! unless
" Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe,
" Satan; who, in the serpent, hath contrived
" Against us this deceit: to crush his head
" Would be revenge indeed! which will be lost
" By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
" Resolved, as thou proposest; so our foe
" Shall scape his punishment ordained, and we,
" Instead, shall double ours upon our heads.
" No more be mentioned then of violence
" Against ourselves; and wilful barrenness,
" That cuts us off from hope; and savours only

" Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,
" Reluctance against God and his just yoke
" Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild
" And gracious temper he both heard, and judged,
" Without wrath or reviling: we expected
" Immediate dissolution, which we thought
" Was meant by death that day; when, lo! to thee
" Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,
" And bringing forth; soon recompensed with joy,
" Fruit of thy womb: on me the curse aslope
" Glanced on the ground; with labour I must earn
" My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse:
" My labour will sustain me. And, lest cold
" Or heat should injure us, his timely care
" Hath, unbesought, provided; and his hands
" Clothed us unworthy, pitying while he judged;
" How much more, if we pray him, will his ear
" Be open, and his heart to pity incline,
" And teach us, farther by what means to shun
" The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow?
" Which now the sky, with various face, begins
" To show us in this mountain; while the winds
" Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
" Of these fair-spreading trees; which bids us seek
" Some better shroud, some better warmth, to cherish
" Our limbs benumbed; ere this diurnal star
" Leave cold the night, how we his gathered beams
" Reflected may with matter sere foment:
" Or, by collision of two bodies, grind
" The air attrite to fire; as late the clouds
" Justling, or pushed with winds, rude in their shock,
" Tine the slant lightning; whose thwart flame driven down
" Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine,
" And sends a comfortable heat from far,
" Which might supply the sun. Such fire to use,
" And what may else be remedy or cure
" To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,
" He will instruct us praying, and of grace
" Beseeching him: so as we need not fear
" To pass commodiously this life, sustained

" By him with many comforts till we end
" In dust—our final rest and native home!
" What better can we do, than, to the place
" Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall
" Before him reverent; and there confess
" Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
" Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air
" Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
" Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek?
" Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
" From his displeasure; in whose look serene,
" When angry most he seemed, and most severe,
" What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?"
So spake our father penitent; nor Eve
Felt less remorse: they, forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell
Before him reverent; and both confessed
Humbly their faults, and pardon begged; with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.

Eleventh Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them: God accepts them, but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of Cherubim to dispossess them; but first to reveal to Adam future things: Michael's coming down. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs; he discerns Michael's approach; goes out to meet him; the Angel denounces their departure. Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits: the Angel leads him up to a high hill; sets before him in vision what shall happen till the flood.

THUS they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood,
Praying; for from the mercy-seat above
Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead; that sighs now breathed
Unutterable; which the Spirit of prayer
Inspired, and winged for Heaven with speedier flight
Than loudest orátory: yet their port
Not of mean suitors; nor important less
Seemed their petition, than when the ancient pair
In fables old (less ancient yet than these),
Deucalion, and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout. To Heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds
Blown vagabond, or frustrate: in they passed
Dimensionless through heavenly doors; then, clad
With incense, where the golden altar fumed,
By their great Intercessor, came in sight
Before the Father's throne: them the glad Son

Presenting, thus to intercede began:
" See, Father, what first-fruits on Earth are sprung
" From thy implanted grace in Man! these sighs
" And prayers, which, in this golden censer, mixed
" With incense, I thy priest before thee bring—
" Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed
" Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
" Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees
" Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen
" From innocence. Now therefore bend thine ear
" To supplication; hear his sighs, though mute:
" Unskilful with what words to pray, let me
" Interpret for him; me, his Advocate
" And propitiation; all his works on me,
" Good or not good, ingraft; my merit those
" Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.
" Accept me; and, in me, from these receive
" The smell of peace toward mankind: let him live
" Before thee reconciled,—at least his days
" Numbered,—though sad; till death, his doom, (which I
" To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse,)
" To better life shall yield him; where with me
" All my redeemed may dwell in joy and bliss;
" Made one with me, as I with thee am one."
To whom the Father, without cloud, serene:
" All thy request for Man, accepted Son!
" Obtain; all thy request was my decree.
" But, longer in that Paradise to dwell,
" The law I gave to nature him forbids:
" Those pure immortal elements, that know
" No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
" Eject him, tainted now; and purge him off,
" As a distemper, gross to air as gross,
" And mortal food; as may dispose him best
" For dissolution, wrought by sin that first
" Distempered all things, and of incorrupt
" Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts
" Created him endowed—with happiness
" And immortality: that fondly lost,
" This other served but to eternize woe;

" Till I provided death: so death becomes
" His final remedy; and, after life
" Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined
" By faith and faithful works, to second life,
" Waked in the renovation of the just,
" Resigns him up with Heaven and Earth renewed.
" But let us call to synod all the blest
" Through Heaven's wide bounds: from them I will not hide
" My judgments; how with mankind I proceed;
" As how with peccant Angels late they saw,
" And in their state, though firm, stood more confirmed."
He ended; and the Son gave signal high
To the bright minister that watched: he blew
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since, perhaps,
When God descended, and perhaps once more
To sound at general doom. The angelic blast
Filled all the regions: from their blissful bowers
Of amaranthine shade, fountain or spring,
By the waters of life, where'er they sat
In fellowships of joy, the sons of light
Hasted, resorting to the summons high;
And took their seats: till, from his throne supreme,
The Almighty thus pronounced his sovran will:
" O sons, like one of us man is become,
" To know both good and evil, since his taste
" Of that defended fruit; but let him boast
" His knowledge of good lost, and evil got;
" Happier, had it sufficed him to have known
" Good by itself, and evil not at all!
" He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite,
" My motions in him; longer than they move,
" His heart I know how variable and vain,
" Self-left. Lest therefore his now bolder hand
" Reach also of the tree of life, and eat,
" And live for ever—dream at least to live
" For ever, to remove him I decree,
" And send him from the garden forth, to till
" The ground whence he was taken—fitter soil!
" Michael! this my behest have thou in charge:
" Take to thee from among the Cherubim

" Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the fiend,
" Or in behalf of man, or to invade
" Vacant possession, some new trouble raise:
" Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God,
" Without remorse, drive out the sinful pair:
" From hallowed ground the unholy; and denounce
" To them, and to their progeny, from thence
" Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint
" At the sad sentence rigorously urged,
" (For I behold them softened, and with tears
" Bewailing their excess,) all terror hide.
" If patiently thy bidding they obey,
" Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal
" To Adam what shall come in future days,
" As I shall thee enlighten; intermix
" My covenant in the Woman's seed renewed;
" So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace:
" And, on the east side of the garden, place,
" Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
" Cherubic watch; and of a sword the flame
" Wide-waving; all approach far off to fright,
" And guard all passage to the tree of life;
" Lest Paradise a receptacle prove
" To spirits foul, and all my trees their prey;
" With whose stolen fruit Man once more to delude."
He ceased; and the archangelic Power prepared
For swift descent; with him the cohort bright
Of watchful Cherubim: four faces each
Had, like a double Janus; all their shape
Spangled with eyes, more numerous than those
Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drowse,
Charmed with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed
Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Meanwhile,
To resalute the world with sacred light,
Leucothea waked, and with fresh dews embalmed
The Earth; when Adam, and first matron Eve,
Had ended now their orisons, and found
Strength added from above—new hope to spring
Out of despair—joy, but with fear yet linked;
Which thus to Eve his welcome words renewed:

" Eve! easily may faith admit, that all
" The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends;
" But, that from us aught should ascend to Heaven
" So prevalent, as to concern the mind
" Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,
" Hard to belief may seem; yet tis will prayer,
" Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
" Even to the seat of God: for since I sought
" By prayer the offended Deity to appease,
" Kneeled, and before him humbled all my heart,
" Methought I saw him placable and mild,
" Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew
" That I was heard with favour; peace returned
" Home to my breast; and to my memory
" His promise, that thy seed shall bruise our foe;
" Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now
" Assures me that the bitterness of death
" Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee,
" Eve rightly called, mother of all mankind!
" Mother of all things living, since by thee
" Man is to live; and all things live for Man."
To whom thus Eve, with sad demeanour meek:
" Ill worthy I, such title should belong
" To me transgressor; who, for thee ordained
" A help, became thy snare; to me reproach
" Rather belongs, distrust, and all dispraise.
" But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
" That I, who first brought death on all, am graced
" The source of life; next favourable thou,
" Who highly thus to entitle me vouchsafest,
" Far other name deserving. But the field
" To labour calls us, now with sweat imposed,
" Though after sleepless night; for see! the Morn,
" All unconcerned with our unrest, begins
" Her rosy progress smiling: let us forth;
" I never from thy side henceforth to stray,
" Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoined
" Laborious till day droop: while here we dwell,
" What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks?
" Here let us live, though in fallen state, content."

So spake, so wished, much-humbled Eve; but Fate
Subscribed not. Nature first gave signs, impressed
On bird, beasts, air; air suddenly eclipsed,
After short blush of Morn: nigh in her sight
The bird of Jove, stooped from his airy tour,
Two birds of gayest plume before him drove;
Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,
First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,
Goodliest of all the forest—hart and hind:
Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight.
Adam observed; and with his eye the chase
Pursuing, not unmoved, to Eve thus spake:
"O Eve! some farther change awaits us nigh,
"Which Heaven by these mute signs in nature shows
"Forerunners of his purpose; or to warn
"Us, haply too secure of our discharge
"From penalty, because from death released
"Some days: how long, and what till then our life,
"Who knows? or more than this, that we are dust,
"And thither must return, and be no more?
"Why else this double object in our sight,
"Of flight pursued in the air, and o'er the ground
"One way the self-same hour? why in the East
"Darkness ere day's mid-course, and morning light
"More orient in yon western cloud, that draws
"O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
"And slow descends with something heavenly fraught?"
He erred not; for by this the heavenly bands
Down, from a sky of jasper, lighted now
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt;
A glorious apparition! had not doubt,
And carnal fear, that day dimmed Adam's eye.
Not that more glorious, when the angel met
Jacob in Mahanaïm, where he saw
The field pavilioned with his guardians bright;
Nor that, which on the flaming mount appeared
In Dothan, covered with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king, who to surprise
One man, assassin-like, had levied war—
War unproclaimed. The princely Hierarch

In their bright stand there left his Powers, to seize
Possession of the garden: he alone,
To find where Adam sheltered, took his way,
Not unperceived of Adam, who to Eve,
While the great visitant approached, thus spake:
" Eve! now expect great tidings, which perhaps
" Of us will soon determine, or impose
" New laws to be observed: for I descry,
" From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
" One of the heavenly host, and, by his gait,
" None of the meanest—some great Potentate,
" Or of the Thrones above; such majesty
" Invests him coming! yet not terrible,
" That I should fear; nor sociably mild,
" As Raphaël, that I should much confide;
" But solemn and sublime; whom, not to offend,
" With reverence I must meet, and thou retire."
He ended: and the Archangel soon drew nigh,
Not in his shape celestial, but as man
Clad to meet man: over his lucid arms
A military vest of purple flowed,
Livelier than Melibœan, or the grain
Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old
In time of truce; Iris had dipt the woof:
His starry helm unbuckled showed him prime
In manhood where youth ended: by his side,
As in a glistering zodiac, hung the sword,
Satan's dire dread; and in his hand the spear.
Adam bowed low: he, kingly, from his state
Inclined not, but his coming thus declared:
" Adam! Heaven's high behest no preface needs:
" Sufficient that thy prayers are heard; and Death,
" Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,
" Defeated of his seizure many days,
" Given thee of grace; wherein thou mayst repent,
" And one bad act with many deeds well done
" Mayst cover: well may then thy Lord, appeased,
" Redeem thee quite from Death's rapacious claim;
" But longer in this Paradise to dwell
" Permits not: to remove thee I am come,

" And send thee from the garden forth, to till
" The ground whence thou wast taken—fitter soil."
He added not; for Adam, at the news
Heart-struck, with chilling gripe of sorrow, stood,
That all his senses bound: Eve, who unseen
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discovered soon the place of her retire:
" O unexpected stroke, worse than of death!
" Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? thus leave
" Thee, native soil! these happy walks and shades,
" Fit haunt of Gods? where I had hope to spend,
" Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day
" That must be mortal to us both. O flowers,
" That never will in other climate grow,
" My early visitation, and my last
" At even; which I bred up with tender hand
" From the first opening bud, and gave ye names!
" Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
" Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?
" Thee lastly, nuptial bower! by me adorned
" With what to sight or smell was sweet! from thee
" How shall I part! and whither wander down
" Into a lower world—to this obscure
" And wild! how shall we breathe in other air
" Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits—"
Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild:
" Lament not, Eve! but patiently resign
" What justly thou hast lost; nor set thy heart,
" Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine:
" Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes
" Thy husband; him to follow thou art bound:
" Where he abides, think there thy native soil."
Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp
Recovering, and his scattered spirits returned,
To Michael thus his humble words addressed:
" Celestial! whether among the Thrones, or named
" Of them the highest; for such of shape may seem
" Prince above Princes! gently hast thou told
" Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
" And in performing end us: what besides

" Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,
" Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring;
" Departure from this happy place, our sweet
" Recess, and only consolation left
" Familiar to our eyes! All places else
" Inhospitable appear, and desolate;
" Nor knowing us, nor known: and, if by prayer
" Incessant I could hope to change the will
" Of Him who all things can, I would not cease
" To weary him with my assiduous cries:
" But prayer against his absolute decree
" No more avails than breath against the wind,
" Blown stifling back on him that breathed it forth:
" Therefore to his great bidding I submit.
" This most afflicts me, that, departing hence,
" As from his face I shall be hid, deprived
" His blessed countenance: here I could frequent,
" With worship, place by place where he vouchsafed
" Presence Divine; and to my sons relate;—
" 'On this mount he appeared; under this tree
" Stood visible; among these pines his voice
" I heard; here with him at this fountain talked:'
" So many grateful altars I would rear
" Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
" Of lustre from the brook, in memory
" Or monument to ages; and thereon
" Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers.
" In yonder nether world where shall I seek
" His bright appearances, or footstep trace?
" For though I fled him angry, yet, recalled
" To life prolonged and promised race, I now
" Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
" Of glory; and far off his steps adore."
To whom thus Michael with regard benign:
" Adam! thou knowst Heaven his, and all the Earth,
" Not this rock only; his omnipresence fills
" Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,
" Fomented by his virtual power, and warmed:
" All the Earth he gave thee to possess and rule,
" No despicable gift! surmise not then

" His presence to these narrow bounds confined
" Of Paradise, or Eden: this had been
" Perhaps thy capital seat; from whence had spread
" All generations, and had hither come
" From all ends of the Earth, to celebrate
" And reverence thee, their great progenitor.
" But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
" To dwell on even ground now with thy sons.
" Yet doubt not but in valley and in plain,
" God is, as here, and will be found alike
" Present; and of his presence many a sign
" Still following thee, still compassing thee round
" With goodness and parental love, his face
" Express, and of his steps the track divine.
" Which that thou mayst believe, and be confirmed
" Ere thou from hence depart, know, I am sent
" To show thee what shall come in future days
" To thee and to thy offspring: good with bad
" Expect to hear; supernal grace contending
" With sinfulness of men; thereby to learn
" True patience; and to temper joy with fear
" And pious sorrow; equally inured
" By moderation either state to bear,
" Prosperous or advérse: so shalt thou lead
" Safest thy life, and best prepared endure
" Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend
" This hill; let Eve (for I have drenched her eyes)
" Here sleep below, while thou to foresight wakest;
" As once thou sleptst, while she to life was formed."
To whom thus Adam gratefully replied:
" Ascend; I follow thee, safe guide! the path
" Thou leadst me; and to the hand of Heaven submit,
" However chastening; to the evil turn
" My obvious breast: arming to overcome
" By suffering, and earn rest from labour won,
" If so I may attain."

So both ascend
In the visions of God. It was a hill,
Of Paradise the highest; from whose top,
The hemisphere of Earth, in clearest ken,

Stretched out to the amplest reach of prospect lay.
Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round,
Whereon, for different cause, the tempter set
Our second Adam, in the wilderness,
To show him all Earth's kingdoms, and their glory.
His eye might there command wherever stood
City, of old or modern fame, the seat
Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls
Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,
To Paquin of Sinæan kings; and thence
To Agra and Lahor of Great Mogul,
Down to the Golden Chersonese; or where
The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
In Hispahan; or where the Russian Czar
In Mosco; or the Sultan in Bizance,
Turchestan-born: nor could his eye not ken
The empire of Negus to his utmost port
Ercoco, and the less maritime kings,
Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,
And Sofala, thought Ophir, to the realm
Of Congo, and Angola, farthest south;
Or thence, from Niger flood to Atlas mount,
The kingdoms of Almansor, Fez, and Sus,
Morocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen;
On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway
The world: in spirit perhaps he also saw
Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,
And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat
Of Atabalipa; and yet unspoiled
Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons
Call El Dorado. But, to nobler sights,
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,
Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight
Had bred; then purged with euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see;
And from the well of life three drops instilled.
So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,
Even to the inmost seat of mental sight,
That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,

Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced;
But him the gentle Angel by the hand
Soon raised, and his attention thus recalled:
"Adam! now ope thine eyes; and first behold
"The effects, which thy original crime hath wrought
"In some to spring from thee; who never touched
"The excepted tree; nor with the snake conspired;
"Nor sinned thy sin; yet from that sin derive
"Corruption, to bring forth more violent deeds."
His eyes he opened, and beheld a field,
Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves
New-reaped; the other part sheep-walks and folds:
In the midst an altar as the landmark stood,
Rustic, of grassy sward: thither anon
A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought
First fruits—the green ear, and the yellow sheaf,
Unculled, as came to hand: a shepherd next,
More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
Choicest and best; then, sacrificing, laid
The inwards and their fat, with incense strewed,
On the cleft wood, and all due rites performed:
His offering soon propitious fire from Heaven
Consumed with nimble glance, and grateful steam;
The other's not, for his was not sincere;
Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talked,
Smote him into the midriff with a stone
That beat out life: he fell; and, deadly pale,
Groaned out his soul, with gushing blood effused!
Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
Dismayed, and thus in haste to the Angel cried:
"O teacher! some great mischief hath befallen
"To that meek man, who well had sacrificed:
"Is piety thus, and pure devotion, paid?"
To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied:
"These too are brethren, Adam, and to come
"Out of thy loins: the unjust the just hath slain
"For envy that his brother's offering found
"From Heaven acceptance; but the bloody fact
"Will be avenged; and the other's faith, approved,
"Lose no reward: though here thou see him die,

" Rolling in dust and gore." To which our sire:
" Alas! both for the deed, and for the cause!
" But have I now seen Death? Is this the way
" I must return to native dust? O sight
" Of terror, foul and ugly to behold!
" Horrid to think! how horrible to feel!"
To whom thus Michaël: " Death thou hast seen
" In his first shape on Man: but many shapes
" Of Death, and many are the ways that lead
" To his grim cave; all dismal! yet to sense
" More terrible at the entrance, than within.
" Some, as thou sawst, by violent stroke shall die;
" By fire, flood, famine; by intemperance more
" In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall bring
" Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
" Before thee shall appear; that thou mayst know
" What misery the inabstinence of Eve
" Shall bring on men."
Immediately a place
Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark;
A lazar-house it seemed; wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased; all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone, and ulcer, colic pangs,
Demoniac phrensy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans! Despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked
With vows, as their chief good, and final hope.
Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of woman born; compassion quelled
His best of man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess;

And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renewed:
" O miserable mankind! to what fall
" Degraded—to what wretched state reserved!
" Better end here unborn. Why is life given
" To be thus wrested from us? rather, why
" Obtruded on us thus? who, if we knew
" What we receive, would either not accept
" Life offered, or soon beg to lay it down;
" Glad to be so dismissed in peace. Can thus
" The image of God in man, created once
" So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
" To such unsightly sufferings be debased
" Under inhuman pains? Why should not Man,
" Retaining still divine similitude
" In part, from such deformities be free,
" And, for his Maker's image sake, exempt?"
" Their Maker's image," answered Michael, " then
" Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
" To serve ungoverned Appetite, and took
" His image whom they served—a brutish vice,
" Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
" Therefore so abject is their punishment,
" Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own;
" Or, if his likeness, by themselves defaced,
" While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules
" To loathsome sickness; worthily, since they
" God's image did not reverence in themselves."
" I yield it just," said Adam, " and submit.
" But is there yet no other way, besides
" These painful passages, how we may come
" To death, and mix with our connatural dust?"
" There is," said Michael, " if thou well observe
" The rule of 'Not too much;' by temperance taught,
" In what thou eatst and drinkst; seeking from thence
" Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
" Till many years over thy head return:
" So mayst thou live, till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
" Into thy mother's lap; or be with ease
" Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature.
" This is old age; but then, thou must outlive

" Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change
" To withered, weak, and grey; thy senses, then
" Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego,
" To what thou hast; and, for the air of youth,
" Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will-reign
" A melancholy damp of cold and dry,
" To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
" The balm of life."

To whom our ancestor:

" Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
" Life much; bent rather, how I may be quit,
" Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge;
" Which I must keep till my appointed day
" Of rendering up, and patiently attend
" My dissolution."

Michael replied:

" Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou livest
" Live well; how long, or short, permit to Heaven:
" And now prepare thee for another sight."

He looked, and saw a spacious plain, whereon
Were tents of various hue: by some, were herds
Of cattle grazing; others, whence the sound
Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
Was heard, of harp and organ; and who moved
Their stops and chords was seen; his volant touch
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
Fled, and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.
In other part stood one who, at the forge
Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass
Had melted, (whether found where casual fire
Had wasted woods on mountain, or in vale,
Down to the veins of earth; thence gliding hot
To some cave's mouth; or whether washed by stream
From under ground;) the liquid ore he drained
Into fit moulds prepared; from which he formed
First his own tools; then, what might else be wrought
Fusil, or graven in metal. After these,
But on the hither side, a different sort
From the high neighbouring hills, which was their seat,
Down to the plain descended; by their guise

Just men they seemed, and all their study bent
To worship God aright, and know his works
Not hid; nor those things last, which might preserve
Freedom and peace to men: they on the plain
Long had not walked, when from the tents, behold!
A bevy of fair women, richly gay
In gems and wanton dress; to the harp they sung
Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on:
The men, though grave, eyed them, and let their eyes
Rove without rein; till, in the amorous net
Fast caught, they liked; and each his liking chose:
And now of love they treat, till the evening star,
Love's harbinger, appeared; then, all in heat,
They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke
Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked:
With feast and music all the tents resound.
Such happy interview, and fair event
Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,
And charming symphonies, attached the heart
Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight;
The bent of nature; which he thus expressed:
" True opener of mine eyes, prime angel blest!
" Much better seems this vision, and more hope
" Of peaceful days portends, than those two past:
" Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse;
" Here nature seems fulfilled in all her ends."
To whom thus Michael:
" Judge not what is best
" By pleasure, though to nature seeming meet;
" Created, as thou art, to nobler end
" Holy and pure—conformity divine.
" Those tents thou sawst so pleasant, were the tents
" Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race
" Who slew his brother: studious they appear
" Of arts that polish life—inventors rare—
" Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit
" Taught them; but they his gifts acknowledged none.
" Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;
" For that fair female troop thou sawst, that seemed
" Of Goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,

" Yet empty of all good, wherein consists
" Woman's domestic honour and chief praise,
" Bred only and completed to the taste
" Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,
" To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye—
" To these that sober race of men, whose lives
" Religious titled them the sons of God,
" Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame,
" Ignobly—to the trains and to the smiles
" Of these fair atheists; and now swim in joy,
" Ere long to swim at large; and laugh, for which
" The world, ere long, a world of tears must weep."
To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:
" O pity and shame, that they, who to live well
" Entered so fair, should turn aside to tread
" Paths indirect, or in the midway faint!
" But still I see the tenor of man's woe
" Holds on the same—from woman to begin."
" From man's effeminate slackness it begins,"
Said the Angel, " who should better hold his place
" By wisdom, and superior gifts received.
" But now prepare thee for another scene."
He looked, and saw wide territory spread
Before him—towns, and rural works between—
Cities of men with lofty gates and towers—
Concourse in arms—fierce faces threatening war—
Giants of mighty bone, and bold emprise;
Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,
Single, or in array of battle ranged,
Both horse and foot: nor idly mustering stood;
One way a band select from forage drives
A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,
From a fat meadow-ground; or fleecy flock,
Ewes and their bleating lambs, over the plain,
Their booty; scarce with life the shepherds fly,
But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray:
With cruel tournament the squadrons join;
Where cattle pastured late, now scattered lies
With carcasses and arms the ensanguined field,
Deserted. Others to a city strong

Lay siege, encamped—by battery, scale, and mine,
Assaulting: others from the wall defend,
With dart and javelin, stones, and sulphurous fire;
On each hand slaughter, and gigantic deeds!
In other part the sceptred heralds call
To council, in the city-gates: anon
Gray-headed men and grave, with warriors mixed
Assemble, and harangues are heard; but soon
In factious opposition; till at last
Of middle age one rising, eminent
In wise deport, spake much of wright and wrong,
Of justice, of religion, truth, and peace,
And judgment from above: him old and young
Exploded, and had seized with violent hands;
Had not a cloud descending snatched him thence,
Unseen amid the throng: so violence
Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law
Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.
Adam was all in tears, and to his guide
Lamenting, turned full sad:
"O, what are these?
" Death's ministers, not men! who thus deal death
" Inhumanly to men, and multiply
" Ten thousand-fold the sin of him that slew
" His brother: for of whom such massacre
" Make they, but of their brethren—men of men?
" But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven
" Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?"
To whom thus Michael:
"These are the product
" Of those ill-mated marriages thou sawst;
" Where good with bad were matched, who of themselves
" Abhor to join; and, by imprudence mixed,
" Produce prodigious births of body or mind.
" Such were these giants, men of high renown;
" For in those days might only shall be admired,
" And valour, and heroic virtue, called:
" To overcome in battle, and subdue
" Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
" Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch

" Of human glory; and, for glory done,
" Of triumph, to be styled great conquerors,
" Patrons of mankind, Gods, and sons of Gods;
" Destroyers rightlier called, and plagues of men.
" Thus fame shall be achieved—renown on Earth;
" And what most merits fame, in silence hid.
" But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheldst
" The only righteous in a world perverse,
" And therefore hated, therefore so beset
" With foes, for daring single to be just,
" And utter odious truth, that God would come
" To judge them with his Saints—him the most High,
" Rapt in a balmy cloud with winged steeds,
" Did, as thou sawst, receive, to walk with God
" High in salvation and the climes of bliss,
" Exempt from Death—to show thee what reward
" Awaits the good, the rest what punishment;
" Which now direct thine eyes, and soon behold."
He looked, and saw the face of things quite changed:
The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar;
All now was turned to jollity and game,
To luxury and riot, feast and dance—
Marrying or prostituting, as befell—
Rape or adultery, where passing fair
Allured them; thence from cups to civil broils.
At length a reverend sire among them came,
And of their doings great dislike declared,
And testified against their ways: he oft
Frequented their assemblies, whereso met—
Triumphs or festivals; and to them preached
Conversion and repentance, as to souls
In prison, under judgment imminent;
But all in vain! which when he saw, he ceased
Contending, and removed his tents far off:
Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,
Began to build a vessel of huge bulk;
Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and height;
Smeared round with pitch; and in the side a door
Contrived; and of provisions laid in large,
For man and beast: when, lo, a wonder strange!

Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
Came sevens and pairs, and entered in as taught
Their order: last the sire and his three sons,
With their four wives; and God made fast the door.
Meanwhile the south wind rose, and, with black wings
Wide hovering, all the clouds together drove
From under Heaven; the hills, to their supply,
Vapour and exhalation, dusk and moist,
Sent up amain: and now the thickened sky
Like a dark ceiling stood: down rushed the rain
Impetuous; and continued, till the earth
No more was seen: the floating vessel swum
Uplifted, and secure with beakèd prow
Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else
Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their pomp
Deep under water rolled: sea covered sea—
Sea without shore: and in their palaces,
Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelped
And stabled; of mankind, so numerous late,
All left in one small bottom swum embarked.

How didst thou grieve then, Adam! to behold
The end of all thy offspring—end so sad—
Depopulation! Thee another flood—
Of tears and sorrow a flood—thee also drowned,
And sunk thee as thy sons; till, gently reared
By the Angel, on thy feet thou stoodst at last,
Though comfortless; as when a father mourns
His children all in view destroyed at once;
And scarce to the Angel utteredst thus thy plaint:

" O visions ill foreseen! Better had I
" Lived ignorant of future! so had borne
" My part of evil only—each day's lot
" Enough to bear: those now, that were dispensed
" The burden of many ages, on me light
" At once, by my fôreknowledge gaining birth
" Abortive, to torment me, ere there being,
" With thought that they must be. Let no man seek
" Henceforth to be foretold, what shall befall
" Him or his children—evil he may be sure,
" Which neither his foreknowing can prevent;

" And he the future evil shall, no less
" In apprehension than in substance, feel,
" Grievous to bear. But that care now is past;
" Man is not whom to warn: those few escaped
" Famine and anguish will at last consume,
" Wandering that watery desert. I had hope,
" When violence was ceased, and war on earth,
" All would have then gone well; peace would have crowned
" With length of happy days the race of man;
" But I was far deceived; for now I see
" Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.
" How comes it thus? Unfold, celestial Guide,
" And whether here the race of man will end."
To whom thus Michael:
" Those, whom last thou sawst
" In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they
" First seen in acts of prowess eminent
" And great exploits, but of true virtue void:
" Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste,
" Subduing nations, and achieved thereby
" Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey,
" Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
" Surfeit, and lust; till wantonness and pride
" Raise, out of friendship, hostile deeds in peace.
" The conquered also, and enslaved by war,
" Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose,
" And fear of God; from whom their piety feigned
" In sharp contést of battle found no aid
" Against invaders; therefore, cooled in zeal,
" Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
" Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords
" Shall leave them to enjoy; for the earth shall bear
" More than enough, that temperance may be tried:
" So all shall turn degenerate—all depraved,
" (Justice and temperance, truth and faith forgot),
" One man except, the only son of light
" In a dark age, against example good,
" Against allurement, custom, and a world
" Offended: fearless of reproach and scorn,
" Or violence, he of their wicked ways

" Shall them admonish; and before them set
" The paths of righteousness, how much more safe,
" And full of peace; denouncing wrath to come
" On their impenitence; and shall return
" Of them derided, but of God observed
" The one just man alive; by his command
" Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheldst,
" To save himself, and household, from amidst
" A world devote to universal wrack.
" No sooner he, with them of man and beast
" Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged,
" And sheltered round, but all the cataracts
" Of Heaven, set open, on the earth shall pour
" Rain, day and night: all fountains of the Deep,
" Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp
" Beyond all bounds; till inundation rise
" Above the highest hills: then shall this mount
" Of Paradise, by might of waves, be moved
" Out of his place, pushed by the hornèd flood,
" With all his verdure spoiled, and trees adrift,
" Down the great river to the opening gulf,
" And there take root—an island salt and bare,
" The haunt of seals, and orcs, and sea-mews' clang;
" To teach thee that God áttributes to place
" No sanctity, if none be thither brought
" By men who there frequent, or therein dwell.
" And now, what further shall ensue, behold."
He looked, and saw the ark hull on the flood,
Which now abated; for the clouds were fled,
Driven by a keen north-wind, that, blowing dry,
Wrinkled the face of Deluge, as decayed;
And the clear Sun on his wide watery glass
Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
With soft foot towards the Deep; who now had stopt
His sluices, as the Heaven his windows shut.
The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,
Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed.
And now the tops of hills, as rocks, appear:

With clamour thence the rapid currents drive,
Towards the retreating sea, their furious tide.
Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies;
And, after him, the surer messenger,
A dove, sent forth once, and again, to spy
Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may light:
The second time returning, in his bill
An olive-leaf he brings—pacific sign!
Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark
The ancient sire descends, with all his train:
Then with uplifted hands, and eyes devout,
Grateful to Heaven, over his head beholds
A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
Conspicuous with three listed colours gay,
Betokening peace from God, and covenant new.
Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,
Greatly rejoiced; and thus his joy broke forth:
"O thou, who future things canst represent
"As present, heavenly instructor! I revive
"At this last sight, assured that man shall live,
"With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.
"Far less I now lament for one whole world
"Of wicked sons destroyed, than I rejoice
"For one man found so perfect, and so just,
"That God vouchsafes to raise another world
"From him, and all his anger to forget.
"But say, what mean those coloured streaks in Heaven
"Distended, as the brow of God appeased?
"Or serve they, as a flowery verge, to bind
"The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
"Lest it again dissolve, and shower the earth?"
To whom the Archangel:
"Dexterously thou aimst;
"So willingly doth God remit his ire,
"Though late repenting him of man depraved;
"Grieved at his heart, when looking down he saw
"The whole earth filled with violence, and all flesh
"Corrupting each their way; yet, those removed,
"Such grace shall one just man find in his sight,
"That he relents, not to blot out mankind;

" And makes a covenant never to destroy
" The earth again by flood; nor let the sea
" Surpass his bounds; nor rain to drown the world,
" With man therein or beast; but, when he brings
" Over the earth a cloud, will therein set
" His triple-coloured bow, whereon to look,
" And call to mind his covenant: day and night,
" Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,
" Shall hold their course; till fire purge all things new,
" Both Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell."

Twelfth Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

The angel Michael continues, from the flood, to relate what shall succeed; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that seed of the Woman shall be, which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall: his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension: the state of the church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael: wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composéd to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the Cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.

As one who in his journey baits at noon,
Though bent on speed; so here the Archangel paused,
Betwixt the world destroyed and world restored,
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose;
Then, with transition sweet, new speech resumes:
"Thus thou hast seen one world begin, and end;
"And Man, as from a second stock, proceed.
"Much thou hast yet to see; but I perceive
"Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
"Must needs impair and weary human sense:
"Henceforth what is to come I will relate;
"Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.
"This second source of men, while yet but few,
"And while the dread of judgment past remains
"Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,
"With some regard to what is just and right
"Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace;
"Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
"Corn, wine, and oil; and, from the herd or flock

" Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid,
" With large wine-offerings poured and sacred feast,
" Shall spend their days in joy unblamed; and dwell
" Long time in peace, by families and tribes,
" Under paternal rule; till one shall rise
" Of proud ambitious heart, who, not content
" With fair equality, fraternal state,
" Will arrogate dominion undeserved
" Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
" Concord and law of nature from the earth;
" Hunting (and men, not beasts, shall be his game)
" With war, and hostile snare, such as refuse
" Subjection to his empire tyrannous:
" A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled
" Before the Lord; as, in despite of Heaven,
" Or from Heaven, claiming second sovranty,
" And from rebellion shall derive his name,
" Though of rebellion others he accuse.
" He with a crew, whom like ambition joins
" With him or under him to tyrannize,
" Marching from Eden towards the West, shall find
" The plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge
" Boils out from under ground—the mouth of Hell.
" Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build
" A city, and tower whose top may reach to Heaven,
" And get themselves a name; lest, far dispersed
" In foreign lands, their memory be lost;
" Regardless whether good or evil fame.
" But God, who oft descends to visit men
" Unseen, and through their habitations walks
" To mark their doings, them beholding soon,
" Comes down to see their city, ere the tower
" Obstruct Heaven-towers; and in derision sets
" Upon their tongues a various spirit, to raze
" Quite out their native language; and, instead,
" To sow a jangling noise of words unknown:
" Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud,
" Among the builders; each to other calls,
" Not understood; till hoarse, and all in rage,
" As mocked they storm: great laughter was in Heaven,

" And looking down, to see the hubbub strange,
" And hear the din: thus was the building left
" Ridiculous, and the work 'Confusion' named."
Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeased:
" O execrable son! so to aspire
" Above his brethren; to himself assuming
" Authority usurped, from God not given:
" He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
" Dominion absolute; that right we hold
" By his dominion; but man over men
" He made not lord; such title to himself
" Reserving, human left from human free.
" But this usurper his encroachment proud
" Stays not on man; to God his tower intends
" Siege and defiance. Wretched man! what food
" Will he convey up thither, to sustain
" Himself, and his rash army; where thin air
" Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross,
" And famish him of breath, if not of bread?"
To whom thus Michael:
" Justly thou abhorr'st
" That son, who on the quiet state of men
" Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
" Rational liberty; yet know withal,
" Since thy original lapse, true liberty
" Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
" Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being:
" Reason in man obscured, or not obeyed,
" Immediately inordinate desires,
" And upstart passions, catch the government
" From reason; and to servitude reduce
" Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits
" Within himself unworthy powers to reign
" Over free reason, God, in judgment just,
" Subjects him from without to violent lords;
" Who oft as undeservedly enthral
" His outward freedom: tyranny must be;
" Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
" Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
" From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,

" But justice, and some fatal curse annexed,
" Deprives them of their outward liberty ;
" Their inward lost: witness the irreverent son
" Of him who built the ark ; who, for the shame
" Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,
" ' Servant of servants,' on his vicious race.
" Thus will this latter, as the former world,
" Still tend from bad to worse ; till God at last,
" Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
" His presence from among them, and avert
" His holy eyes ; resolving from thenceforth
" To leave them to their own polluted ways ;
" And one peculiar nation to select
" From all the rest, of whom to be invoked—
" A nation from one faithful man to spring :
" Him, on this side Euphrates yet residing,
" Bred up in idol-worship—(O, that men—
" Canst thou believe ?—should be so stupid grown,
" While yet the patriarch lived who scaped the flood,
" As to forsake the living God, and fall
" To worship their own work in wood and stone
" For Gods !)—yet him God the Most High vouchsafes
" To call by vision, from his father's house,
" His kindred, and false Gods, into a land
" Which he will show him ; and from him will raise
" A mighty nation, and upon him shower
" His benediction so, that in his seed
" All nations shall be blest : he straight obeys—
" Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes :
" I see him, (but thou canst not,) with what faith
" He leaves his Gods, his friends, and native soil,
" Ur of Chaldea, passing now the ford,
" To Haran ; after him a cumbrous train
" Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude ;
" Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
" With God, who called him, in a land unknown.
" Canaan he now attains : I see his tents
" Pitched about Sechem, and the neighbouring plain
" Of Moreh ; there, by promise, he receives
" Gift to his progeny of all that land,

" From Hamath northward to the Desert south ;
" (Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed ;)
" From Hermon east to the great western sea ;
" Mount Hermon—yonder sea—each place behold
" In prospect, as I point them ; on the shore,
" Mount Carmel ; here, the double-founted stream,
" Jordan, true limit eastward ; but his sons
" Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.
" This ponder, that all nations of the earth
" Shall in his seed be blessèd : by that seed
" Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise
' The serpent's head ; whereof to thee anon
' Plainer shall be revealed. This patriarch blest,
" Whom ' faithful Abraham' due time shall call,
" A son, and of his son a grandchild, leaves ;
" Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown :
" The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs
" From Canaan, to a land hereafter called
" Egypt, divided by the river Nile ;
" See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
" Into the sea. To sojourn in that land
" He comes, invited by a younger son
" In time of dearth ; a son, whose worthy deeds
" Raise him to be the second in that realm
" Of Pharaoh : there he dies, and leaves his race
" Growing into a nation ; and, now grown,
" Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
" To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests
" Too numerous ; whence of guests he makes them slaves
" Inhospitably, and kills their infant males :
" Till by two brethren (these two brethren call
" Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim
" His people from enthralment, they return,
" With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.
" But first the lawless tyrant, who denies
" To know their God, or message to regard,
" Must be compelled by signs and judgments dire :
" To blood unshed the rivers must be turned ;
" Frogs, lice, and flies must all his palace fill
" With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land ;

" His cattle must of rot and murren die ;
" Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,
" And all his people; thunder mixed with hail,
" Hail mixed with fire, must rend the Egyptian sky,
" And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls;
" What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,
" A darksome cloud of locusts, swarming down,
" Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green ;
" Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,
" Palpable darkness, and blot out three days ;
" Last, with one midnight-stroke, all the first-born
" Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds
" The river-dragon tamed at length submits
" To let his sojourners depart, and oft
" Humbles his stubborn heart, but still, as ice
" More hardened after thaw; till, in his rage
" Pursuing whom he late dismissed, the sea
" Swallows him, with his host; but them let pass,
" As on dry land, between two crystal walls;
" Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand
" Divided till his rescued gain their shore :
" Such wondrous power God to his saint will lend,
" Though present in his Angel ; who shall go
" Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire—
" By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire ;
" To guide them in their journey, and remove
" Behind them, while the obdúrate king pursues :
" All night he will pursue ; but his approach
" Darkness defends between till morning watch ;
" Then, through the fiery pillar and the cloud
" God looking forth will trouble all his host,
" And craze their chariot-wheels : when, by command,
" Moses once more his potent rod extends
" Over the sea ; the sea his rod obeys ;
" On their embattled ranks the waves return,
" And overwhelm their war : the race elect
" Safe, towards Canaan from the shore, advance
" Through the Wild Desert; not the readiest way,
" Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarmed,
" War terrify them inexpert, and fear

" Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
" Inglorious life with servitude; for life
" To noble, and ignoble, is more sweet
" Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on.
" This also shall they gain by their delay
" In the wide wilderness; there they shall found
" Their government, and their great senate choose
" Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordained.
" God from the mount of Sinai, whose gray top
" Shall tremble, he descending,) will himself
" In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpet's sound,
" Ordain them laws—part, such as appertain
" To civil justice—part, religious rites
" Of sacrifice; informing them, by types
" And shadows of that destined Seed to bruise
" The serpent, by what means he shall achieve
" Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God
" To mortal ear is dreadful: they beseech
" That Moses might report to them his will,
" And terror cease: he grants what they besought,
" Instructed that to God is no access
" Without Mediator; whose high office now
" Moses in figure bears, to introduce
" One greater, of whose day he shall foretell;
" And all the prophets in their age the times
" Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus, laws and rites
" Established, such delight hath God in men
" Obedient to his will, that he vouchsafes
" Among them to set up his tabernacle—
" The Holy One with mortal men to dwell.
" By his prescript a sanctuary is framed
" Of cedar, overlaid with gold; therein
" An ark, and in the ark his testimony,
" The records of his covenant; over these
" A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings
" Of two bright Cherubim; before him burn
" Seven lamps, as in a zodiac representing
" The heavenly fires: over the tent a cloud
" Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night,
" Save when they journey: and at length they come,

" Conducted by his Angel, to the land
" Promised to Abraham and his seed: the rest
" Were long to tell; how many battles fought;
" How many kings destroyed, and kingdoms won;
" Or how the sun shall in mid Heaven stand still
" A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,
" Man's voice commanding, 'Sun, in Gibeon stand,
" And thou, moon, in the vale of Ajalon,
" Till Israel overcome!' so call the third
" From Abraham, son of Isaac; and from him
" His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win."
Here Adam interposed:
" O sent from Heaven,
" Enlightener of my darkness! gracious things
" Thou hast revealed; those chiefly, which concern
" Just Abraham and his seed: now first I find
" Mine eyes true opening, and my heart much eased;
" Erewhile perplexed with thoughts, what would become
" Of me and all mankind; but now I see
" His day, in whom all nations shall be blest;
" Favour unmerited by me, who sought
" Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.
" This yet I apprehend not; why to those,
" Among whom God will deign to dwell on Earth,
" So many and so various laws are given:
" So many laws argue so many sins
" Among them: how can God with such reside?"
To whom thus Michael:
" Doubt not but that sin
" Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
" And therefore was law given them, to evince
" Their natural pravity, by stirring up
" Sin against law to fight; that when they see
" Law can discover sin, but not remove,
" Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
" The blood of bulls and goats; they may conclude
" Some blood more precious must be paid for man—
" Just for unjust; that, in such righteousness
" To them by faith imputed, they may find
" Justification towards God, and peace

" Of conscience; which the law, by ceremonies,
" Cannot appease nor man the moral part
" Perform, and not performing cannot live.
" So law appears imperfect; and but given
" With purpose to resign them, in full time,
" Up to a better covenant; disciplined
" From shadowy types to truth—from flesh to spirit
" From imposition of strict laws, to free
" Acceptance of large grace—from servile fear
" To filial—works of law to works of faith.
" And therefore shall not Moses, though of God
" Highly beloved, being but the minister
" Of law, his people into Canaan lead;
" But Joshua, whom the Gentiles Jesus call;
" His name and office bearing, who shall quell
" The adversary-serpent, and bring back,
" Through the world's wilderness long-wandered man
" Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.
" Meanwhile they, in their earthly Canaan placed,
" Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
" National interrupt their public peace,
" Provoking God to raise them enemies;
" From whom as oft he saves them penitent,
" By judges first, then under kings; of whom
" The second, both for piety renowned
" And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
" Irrevocable, that his regal throne
" For ever shall endure; the like shall sing
" All prophecy, that of the royal stock
" Of David (so I name this king) shall rise
" A son—the Woman's seed to thee foretold—
" Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust
" All nations; and to kings foretold, of kings
" The last; for of his reign shall be no end.
" But first, a long succession must ensue:
" And his next son, for wealth and wisdom famed,
" The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
" Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
" Such follow him as shall be registered
" Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll;

" Whose foul idolatries, and other faults
" Heaped to the popular sum, will so incense
" God, as to leave them, and expose their land,
" Their city, his temple, and his holy ark,
" With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
" To that proud city, whose high walls thou sawst
" Left in confusion—Babylon thence called.
" There in captivity he lets them dwell
" The space of seventy years; then brings them back,
" Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn
" To David, stablished as the days of Heaven.
" Returned from Babylon by leave of Kings
" Their lords, whom God disposed, the House of God
" They first re-edify; and for a while
" In mean estate live moderate; till, grown
" In wealth and multitude, factious they grow.
" But first among the priests dissension springs—
" Men who attend the altar, and should most
" Endeavour peace: their strife pollution brings
" Upon the temple itself: at last, they seize
" The sceptre, and regard not David's sons;
" Then lose it to a stranger, that the true
" Anointed King Messiah might be born
" Barred of his right; yet at his birth a star,
" Unseen before in Heaven, proclaims him come;
" And guides the eastern sages, who inquire
" His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold:
" His place of birth a solemn Angel tells
" To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night:
" They gladly thither haste, and by a quire
" Of squadroned Angels hear his carol sung.
" A virgin is his mother, but his sire
" The Power of the Most High: he shall ascend
" The throne hereditary, and bound his reign
" With Earth's wide bounds, his glory with the Heavens."

He ceased; discerning Adam with such joy
Surcharged, as had, like grief, been dewed in tears,
Without the vent of words; which these he breathed:

" O prophet of glad tidings, finisher
" Of utmost hope! now clear I understand

" (What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in vain),
" Why our great Expectation should be called
" The seed of Woman. Virgin mother, hail!
" High in the love of Heaven! Yet from my loins
" Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son
" Of God Most High; so God with man unites.
" Needs must the serpent now his capital bruise
" Expect with mortal pain: say, where and when
" Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the victor's heel?"
To whom thus Michael:
" Dream not of their fight,
" As of a duel, or the local wounds
" Of head or heel: not therefore joins the Son
" Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
" Thy enemy; nor so is overcome
" Satan, whose fall from Heaven (a deadlier bruise)
" Disabled not to give thee thy death's wound:
" Which he, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
" Not by destroying Satan, but his works
" In thee, and in thy seed: nor can this be,
" But by fulfilling that which thou didst want—
" Obedience to the law of God, imposed
" On penalty of death; and suffering death—
" The penalty to thy transgression due,
" And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:
" So only can high justice rest appaid.
" The law of God exact he shall fulfil
" Both by obedience, and by love, though love
" Alone fulfil the law; thy punishment
" He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
" To a reproachful life, and cursed death;
" Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
" In his redemption; and that this obedience,
" Imputed, becomes theirs by faith; his merits
" To save them, not their own (though legal) works.
" For this he shall live hated; be blasphemed;
" Seized on by force; judged, and to death condemned—
" A shameful and accursed! nailed to the cross
" By his own nation; slain for bringing life:
" But to the cross he nails thy enemies—

" The law that is against thee, and the sins
" Of all mankind with him there crucified,
" Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
" In this his satisfaction. So he dies,
" But soon revives; death over him no power
" Shall long usurp: ere the third dawning light
" Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
" Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,
" Thy ransom paid, which man from death redeems,
" His death for man—as many as offered life
" Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
" By faith not void of works. This godlike act
" Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have died,
" In sin for ever lost from life: this act
" Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength,
" Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms;
" And fix far deeper in his head their stings
" Than temporal death shall bruise the victor's heel,
" Or theirs whom he redeems—a death, like sleep—
" A gentle wafting to immortal life.
" Nor after resurrection shall he stay
" Longer on Earth, than certain times to appear
" To his disciples, men who in his life
" Still followed him; to them shall leave in charge
" To teach all nations what of him they learned
" And his salvation, them who shall believe
" Baptizing in the profluent stream—the sign
" Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
" Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,
" For death, like that which the Redeemer died.
" All nations they shall teach; for, from that day,
" Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins
" Salvation shall be preached, but to the sons
" Of Abraham's faith, wherever through the world;
" So in his seed all nations shall be blest.
" Then to the Heaven of Heavens he shall ascend
" With victory, triúmphing through the air
" Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise
" The Serpent, Prince of air, and drag in chains
" Through all his realm, and there confounded leave;

" Then enter into glory, and resume
" His seat at God's right hand, exalted high
" Above all names in Heaven; and thence shall come
" When this world's dissolution shall be ripe,
" With glory and power to judge both quick and dead--
" To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward
" His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
" Whether in Heaven or Earth; for then the Earth
" Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
" Than this of Eden, and far happier days!"
So spake the Archangel Michaël; then paused,
As at the world's great period; and our sire,
Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied:
" O, Goodness infinite, Goodness immense!
" That all this good of evil shall produce,
" And evil turn to good; more wondefful
" Than that, which by creation first brought forth
" Light out of Darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
" Whether I should repent me now of sin
" By me done, and occasioned; or rejoice
" Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring—
" To God more glory—more good-will to men
" From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.
" But say, if our Deliverer up to Heaven
" Must re-ascend, what will betide the few
" His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd,
" The enemies of truth? Who then shall guide
" His people, who defend? Will they not deal
" Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?"
" Be sure they will," said the Angel; " but from Heaven
" He to his own a Comforter will send,
" The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
" His Spirit within them; and the law of faith,
" Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
" To guide them in all truth; and also arm
" With spiritual armour, able to resist
" Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts,
" What man can do against them, not afraid,
" Though to the death: against such cruelties
" With inward consolations recompensed,

" And oft supported so as shall amaze
" Their proudest persecutors; for the Spirit,
" Poured first on his apostles, whom he sends
" To evangelize the nations, then on all
" Baptized, shall them with wondrous gifts endue
" To speak all tongues, and do all miracles,
" As did their Lord before them. Thus they win
" Great numbers of each nation to receive
" With joy the tidings brought from Heaven: at length,
" Their ministry performed, and race well run,
" Their doctrine and their story written left,
" They die: but in their room, as they forewarn,
" Wolves shall succeed for teachers—grievous wolves,
" Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven
" To their own vile advantages shall turn
" Of lucre and ambition; and the truth
" With superstitions and traditions taint,
" Left only in those written records pure,
" Though not, but by the Spirit, understood.
" Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
" Places, and titles, and with these to join
" Secular power, though feigning still to act
" By spiritual; to themselves appropriating
" The Spirit of God, promised alike, and given
" To all believers; and, from that pretence,
" Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
" On every conscience; laws which none shall find
" Left them enrolled, or what the Spirit within
" Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then,
" But force the Spirit of grace itself, and bind
" His consort Liberty? what but unbuild
" His living temples, built by faith to stand,
" Their own faith, not another's? for on Earth
" Who against faith and conscience can be heard
" Infallible? yet many will presume:
" Whence heavy persecution shall arise
" On all, who in the worship persevere
" Of spirit and truth; the rest (far greater part)
" Will deem in outward rites and specious forms
" Religion satisfied; truth shall retire

" Bestruck with slanderous darts, and works of faith
" Rarely be found. So shall the world go on,
" To good malignant, to bad men benign;
" Under her own weight groaning; till the day
" Appear of respiration to the just,
" And vengeance to the wicked, at return
" Of him so lately promised to thy aid,
" The Woman's seed; obscurely then foretold,
" Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord;
" Last, in the clouds, from Heaven to be revealed
" In glory of the Father, to dissolve
" Satan, with his perverted world; then raise
" From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,
" New Heavens, new Earth, ages of endless date,
" Founded in righteousness, and peace, and love;
" To bring forth fruits, joy, and eternal bliss!"
He ended, and thus Adam last replied:
" How soon hath thy prediction, seer blest,
" Measured this transient world, the race of time,
" Till time stand fixed! Beyond is all abyss—
" Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
" Greatly instructed I shall hence depart;
" Greatly in peace of thought; and have my fill
" Of knowledge—what this vessel can contain;
" Beyond which was my folly to aspire.
" Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
" And love with fear the only God; to walk
" As in his presence; ever to observe
" His providence; and on him sole depend,
" Merciful over all his works, with good
" Still overcoming evil, and by small
" Accomplishing great things—by things deemed weak
" Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
" By simply meek: that suffering for truth's sake
" Is fortitude to highest victory;
" And, to the faithful, death the gate of life;
" Taught this by his example, whom I now
" Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest."
To whom thus also the Angel last replied:
" This having learned, thou hast attained the sum

THE EXPULSION.

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" Of wisdom: hope no higher, though all the stars
" Thou knewst by name, and all the ethereal Powers,
" All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
" Or works of God in heaven, air, earth, or sea,
" And all the riches of this world enjoyedst,
" And all the rule, one empire: only add
" Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith,
" Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
" By name to come called charity, the soul
" Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth
" To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
" A paradise within thee, happier far!
" Let us descend now therefore from this top
" Of speculation; for the hour precise
" Exacts our parting hence; and, see! the guards,
" By me encamped on yonder hill, expect
" Their motion; at whose front a flaming sword,
" In signal of remove, waves fiercely round.
" We may no longer stay; go, waken Eve;
" Her also I with gentle dreams have claimed
" Portending good, and all her spirits composed
" To meek submission: thou, at season fit,
" Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard;
" Chiefly, what may concern her faith to know,
" The great deliverance by her seed to come
" (For by 'the Woman's seed') on all mankind;
" That ye may live, which will be many days,
" Both in one faith unanimous, though sad
" (With cause!) for evils past; yet much more cheered
" With meditation on the happy end."
He ended; and they both descend the hill:
Descended, Adam to the bower, where Eve
Lay sleeping, ran before; but found her waked;
And thus with words not sad she him received:
" Whence thou returnst, and whether wentst, I know;
" For God is also in sleep; and dreams advise,
" Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
" Presaging, since with sorrow and heart's distress
" Wearied I fell asleep: but now lead on;
" In me is no delay; with thee to go,

" Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
" Is to go hence unwilling: thou to me
" Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,
" Who for my wilful crime art banished hence.
" This farther consolation yet secure
" I carry hence; though all by me is lost,
" (Such favour I unworthy am vouchsafed)—
" By me the promised seed shall all restore."
So spake our mother Eve, and Adam heard
Well pleased, but answered not: for now, too nigh
The Archangel stood; and from the other hill
To their fixed station, all in bright array,
The Cherubim descended; on the ground
Gliding meteorous, as evening mist
Risen from a river o'er the marish glides,
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel
Homeward returning. High in front advanced,
The brandished sword of God before them blazed,
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime: whereat
In either hand the hastening Angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain; then disappeared
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged, and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon:
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

PARADISE REGAINED.

First Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE subject proposed. Invocation of the Holy Spirit. The poem opens with John baptizing at the river Jordan. Jesus, coming there, is baptized; and is attested by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and by a voice from Heaven, to be the Son of God. Satan, who is present, upon this immediately flies up into the regions of the air; where, summoning his infernal council, he acquaints them with his apprehensions that Jesus is that seed of the Woman, destined to destroy all their power; and points out to them the immediate necessity of bringing the matter to proof, and of attempting, by snares and fraud, to counteract and defeat the person from whom they have so much to dread: this office he offers himself to undertake; and, his offer being accepted, sets out on his enterprise. In the meantime, God, in the assembly of holy Angels, declares that he has given up his Son to be tempted by Satan; but foretells that the tempter shall be completely defeated by him: upon which the Angels sing a hymn of triumph. Jesus is led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, while he is meditating on the commencement of his great office of Saviour of mankind. Pursuing his meditations, he narrates, in a soliloquy, what divine and philanthropic impulses he had felt from his early youth, and how his mother, Mary, on perceiving these dispositions in him, had acquainted him with the circumstances of his birth, and informed him that he was no less a person than the Son of God; to which he adds what his own inquiries and reflections had supplied in confirmation of this great truth, and particularly dwells on the recent attestation of it at the river Jordan. Our Lord passes forty days, fasting in the wilderness; where the wild beasts become mild and harmless in his presence. Satan now appears under the form of an old peasant; and enters into discourse with our Lord, wondering what could have brought him alone into so dangerous a place, and at the same time professing to recognise him for the person lately acknowledged by John at the river Jordan, to be the Son of God. Jesus briefly replies. Satan rejoins with a description of the difficulty of supporting life in the wilderness; and entreats Jesus, if he be really the Son of God, to manifest his divine power, by changing some of the stones into bread. Jesus reproves him, and at the same time tells him that he knows who he is. Satan instantly avows himself, and offers an artful

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PARADISE REGAINED.

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About the world, at that assembly famed
Would not be last; and, with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, the exalted man to whom
Such high attest was given, awhile surveyed
With wonder; then, with envy fraught and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summons all his mighty peers,
Within thick clouds and dark tenfold involved,
A gloomy consistory; and them amidst,
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake:
" O ancient Powers of Air, and this wide world!
" (For much more willingly I mention Air,
' This our old conquest, than remember Hell,
' Our hated habitation), well ye know,
" How many ages, as the years of men,
" This universe we have possessed, and ruled,
" In manner at our will, the affairs of Earth,
" Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
" Lost Paradise, deceived by me; though since
" With dread attending when that fatal wound
" Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve
" Upon my head. Long the decrees of Heaven
" Delay, for longest time to him is short;
" And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
" This dreaded time have compassed, wherein we
" Must bide the stroke of that long-threatened wound;
" At least, if so we can, and, by 'the head
" Broken,' be not intended all our power
" To be infringed, our freedom and our being,
" In this fair empire won of Earth and Air:
" For this ill news I bring; the Woman's Seed,
" Destined to this, is late of woman born:
" His birth to our just fear gave no small cause;
" But his growth now to youth's full flower, displaying
" All virtue, grace, and wisdom, to achieve
" Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
" Before him a great prophet, to proclaim
" His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
" Invites, and, in the consecrated stream,
" Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them, so

" Purified, to receive him pure, or rather,
" To do him honour as their King: all come;
" And he himself among them was baptized;
" Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
" The testimony of Heaven, that who he is
" Thenceforth the nations may not doubt. I saw
" The prophet do him reverence; on him, rising
" Out of the water, Heaven above the clouds
" Unfold her crystal doors; thence on his head
" A perfect dove descend (whate'er it meant),
" And out of Heaven the sovran voice I heard,—
" 'This is my Son beloved; in him am pleased.'
" His mother then is mortal, but his Sire
" He who obtains the monarchy of Heaven:
" And what will he not do to advance his Son?
" His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
" When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep.
" Who this is we must learn; for man he seems
" In all his lineaments; though in his face
" The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
" Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
" Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
" But must with something sudden be opposed—
" Not force, but well-couched fraud, well-woven snares—
" Ere in the head of nations he appear,
" Their king, their leader, and supreme on Earth.
" I, when no other durst, sole undertook
" The dismal expedition, to find out
" And ruin Adam; and the exploit performed
" Successfully: a calmer voyage now
" Will waft me; and the way found prosperous once
" Induces best to hope of like success."
He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to the infernal crew,
Distracted and surprised with deep dismay
At these sad tidings; but no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief:
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprise
To him, their great dictator, whose attempt,

At first, against mankind so well had thrived
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
From Hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents, and Potentates, and Kings, yea, Gods,
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
So to the coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles.
Where he might likeliest find this new-declared,
This Man of Men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try;
So to subvert whom he suspected raised
To end his reign on Earth, so long enjoyed:
But, contrary, unweeting he fulfilled
The purposed counsel, preordained and fixed,
Of the Most High; who, in full frequence bright
Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake:
"Gabriel! this day by proof thou shalt behold,
" Thou and all Angels conversant on Earth
" With man or men's affairs, how I begin
" To verify that solemn message, late
" On which I sent thee to the Virgin pure
" In Galilee, that she should bear a son,
" Great in renown, and called the Son of God;
" Then toldst her, doubting how these things could be
" To her a virgin, that on her should come
" The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest
" O'ershadow her. This Man, born and now upgrown,
" To show him worthy of his birth divine
" And high prediction, henceforth I expose
" To Satan: let him tempt, and now assay
" His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
" And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
" Of his apostasy: he might have learnt
" Less overweening, since he failed in Job,
" Whose constant perseverance overcame
" Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
" He now shall know I can produce a Man,
" Of female seed, far abler to resist
" All his solicitations, and at length
" All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell,

" Winning, by conquest, what the first man lost,
" By fallacy surprised. But first I mean
" To exercise him in the wilderness:
" There he shall first lay down the rudiments
" Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
" To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes,
" By humiliation and strong sufferance:
" His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength,
" And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh;
" That all the Angels and ethereal Powers—
" They now, and men hereafter—may discern,
" From what consummate virtue I have chose
" This perfect Man, by merit called my Son,
" To earn salvation for the sons of men."
So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
Admiring stood a space; then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures moved,
Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument:
" Victory and triumph to the Son of God,
" Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
" But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles!
" The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
" Ventures his filial virtue, though untried,
" Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
" Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
" Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of Hell;
" And, devilish machinations, come to nought!"
So they in Heaven their odes and vigils tuned:
Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodged in Bethabara, where John baptized,
Musing, and much revolving in his breast,
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
Publish his godlike office now mature,
One day forth walked alone, the Spirit leading,
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
With solitude; till, far from track of men,
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
He entered now the bordering desert wild;

And, with dark shades and rocks environed round,
His holy meditations thus pursued:
" O, what a multitude of thoughts at once
" Awakened in me swarm, while I consider
" What from within I feel myself, and hear
" What from without comes often to my ears,
" Ill sorting with my present state compared!
" When I was yet a child, no childish play
" To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
" Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,
" What might be public good: myself I thought
" Born to that end—born to promote all truth,
" All righteous things; therefore, above my years,
" The law of God I read, and found it sweet,
" Made it my whole delight; and in it grew
" To such perfection, that, ere yet my age
" Had measured twice six years, at our great feast
" I went into the temple, there to hear
" The teachers of our law, and to propose
" What might improve my knowledge or their own;
" And was admired by all. Yet this not all
" To which my spirit aspired; victorious deeds
" Flamed in my heart—heroic acts—one while
" To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke;
" Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the Earth,
" Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
" Till truth were freed, and equity restored:
" Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
" By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
" And make persuasion do the work of fear;
" At least to try, and teach the erring soul,
" Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware
" Misled; the stubborn only to subdue.
" These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving,
" By words at times cast forth, inly rejoiced,
" And said to me apart: 'High are thy thoughts,
" O Son! but nourish them, and let them soar
" To what height sacred virtue and true worth
" Can raise them, though above example high:
" By matchless deeds express thy matchless Sire.

" For know, thou art no Son of mortal man,
" Though men esteem thee low of parentage;
" Thy Father is the Eternal King who rules
" All Heaven and Earth, angels and sons of men:
" A messenger from God foretold thy birth,
" Conceived in me a virgin; he foretold
" Thou shouldst be great, and sit on David's throne,
" And of thy kingdom there should be no end.
" At thy nativity, a glorious quire
" Of Angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung
" To shepherds, watching at their folds by night,
" And told them the Messiah now was born—
" Where they might see him—and to thee they came,
" Directed to the manger where thou layst,
" For in the inn was left no better room:
" A star, not seen before, in Heaven appearing,
" Guided the wise men thither from the East,
" To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold;
" By whose bright course led on they found the place,
" Affirming it thy star, new-graven in Heaven,
" By which they knew thee King of Israel born.
" Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warned
" By vision, found thee in the temple, and spake,
" Before the altar and the vested priest,
" Like things of thee to all that present stood.'
" This having heard, straight I again revolved
" The law and prophets, searching what was writ
" Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
" Known partly, and soon found, of whom they spake
" I am; this chiefly, that my way must lie
" Through many a hard assay, e'en to the death,
" Ere I the promised kingdom can attain,
" Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins—
" Full weight—must be transferred upon my head.
" Yet, neither thus disheartened nor dismayed,
" The time prefixed I waited; when behold
" The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,
" Not knew by sight), now come, who was to come
" Before Messiah, and his way prepare!
" I, as all others, to his baptism came,

" Which I believed was from above; but he
" Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaimed
" Me him—for it was shown him so from Heaven—
" Me him, whose harbinger he was; and first
" Refused on me his baptism to confer,
" As much his greater, and was hardly won:
" But, as I rose out of the laving stream,
" Heaven opened her eternal doors, from whence
" The Spirit descended on me like a dove;
" And last, the sum of all, my Father's voice,
" Audibly heard from Heaven, pronounced me his—
" Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
" He was well pleased; by which I knew the time
" Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
" But openly begin, as best becomes,
" The authority which I derived from Heaven.
" And now by some strong motion I am led
" Into this wilderness, to what intent
" I learn not yet—perhaps I need not know;
" For what concerns my knowledge God reveals."
So spake our Morning Star, then in his rise;
And, looking round, on every side beheld
A pathless desert—dusk with horrid shades:
The way he came not having marked, return
Was difficult, by human steps untrod;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied, of things past and to come,
Lodged in his breast, as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.
Full forty days he passed, whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
Under the covert of some ancient oak,
Or cedar, to defend him from the dew,
Or harboured in one cave, is not revealed;
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt,
Till those days ended; hungered then at last
Among wild beasts: they at his sight grew mild,
Nor sleeping him, nor waking, harmed; his walk
The fiery serpent fled, and noxious worm;
The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof.

But now an aged man, in rural weeds,
Following, as seemed, the quest of some stray ewe,
Or withered sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day, when winds blow keen,
To warm him, wet returned from field, at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Perused him, then with words thus uttered spake:
" Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place,
" So far from path or road of men, who pass
" In troop or caravan? for single none
" Durst ever, who returned, and dropt not here
" His carcass, pined with hunger and with drouth.
" I ask the rather, and the more admire,
" For that to me thou seemst the man, whom late
" Our new baptizing Prophet, at the ford
" Of Jordan, honoured so, and called thee Son
" Of God: I saw and heard, for we sometimes
" Who dwell this wild, constrained by want, come forth
" To town or village nigh (nighest is far),
" Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear
" What happens new; fame also finds us out."
To whom the Son of God:
" Who brought me hither
" Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek."
" By miracle he may," replied the swain;
" What other way I see not; for we here
" Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inured
" More than the camel, and to drink go far,—
" Men to much misery and hardship born:
" But, if thou be the Son of God, command
" That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;
" So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
" With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste."
He ended, and the Son of God replied:
" Thinkst thou such force in bread? Is it not written,
" (For I discern thee other than thou seemst),
" 'Man lives not by bread only, but each word
" Proceeding from the mouth of God,' who fed
" Our fathers here with manna? in the mount
" Moses was forty days, nor eat, nor drank;

" And forty days Elijah, without food,
" Wandered this barren waste; the same I now:
" Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
" Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?"
Whom answered thus the Arch-fiend, now undisguised:
" 'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate,
" Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,
" Kept not my happy station, but was driven
" With them from bliss to the bottomless deep;
" Yet to that hideous place not so confined
" By rigour unconniving, but that oft,
" Leaving my dolorous prison, I enjoy
" Large liberty to round this globe of Earth,
" Or range in the Air; nor from the Heaven of Heavens
" Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
" I came among the sons of God, when he
" Gave up into my hands Uzzéan Job,
" To prove him and illustrate his high worth;
" And, when to all his Angels he proposed
" To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud,
" That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
" I undertook that office, and the tongues
" Of all his flattering prophets glibbed with lies
" To his destruction, as I had in charge.
" For what he bids I do: though I have lost
" Much lustre of my native brightness—lost
" To be beloved of God; I have not lost
" To love, at least contemplate and admire,
" What I see excellent in good, or fair,
" Or virtuous; I should so have lost all sense:
" What can be then less in me than desire
" To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
" Declared the Son of God,—to hear attent
" Thy wisdom, and behold thy godlike deeds?
" Men generally think me such a foe
" To all mankind: why should I? they to me
" Never did wrong or violence; by them
" I lost not what I lost; rather by them
" I gained what I have gained, and with them dwell
" Copartner in these regions of the world,

" If not disposer; lend them oft my aid;
" Oft my advice by presages and signs,
" And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
" Whereby they may direct their future life.
" Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
" Companions of my misery and woe.
" At first it may be; but, long since with woe
" Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof,
" That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
" Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load.
" Small consolation then, were man adjoined:
" This wounds me most; (what can it less?) that man—
" Man fallen shall be restored,—I never more."
To whom our Saviour sternly thus replied:
" Deservedly thou grievest, composed of lies
" From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;
" Who boastst release from Hell, and leave to come
" Into the Heaven of Heavens:—thou comest indeed
" (As a poor, miserable, captive thrall
" Comes to the place where he before had sat
" Among the prime in splendour), now deposed,
" Ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned,—
" A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,
" To all the host of Heaven: the happy place
" Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy;—
" Rather inflames thy torment, representing
" Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable;
" So never more in Hell than when in Heaven.
" But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King!
" Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
" Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
" What but thy malice moved thee to misdeem
" Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
" With all inflictions?—but his patience won.
" The other service was thy chosen task,—
" To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
" For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
" Yet thou pretendst to truth! All oracles
" By thee are given, and what confessed more true
" Among the nations? that hath been thy craft,—

" By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
" But what have been thy answers?—what but dark,
" Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
" Which they who asked have seldom understood,
" And not well understood as good not known?
" Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
" Returned the wiser, or the more instruct,
" To fly or follow what concerned him most,
" And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
" For God hath justly given the nations up
" To thy delusions;—justly, since they fell
" Idolatrous: but, when his purpose is
" Among them to declare his providence
" To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
" But from him, or his Angels president
" In every province? who, themselves disdaining
" To approach thy temples, give thee in command
" What, to the smallest tittle, thou shalt say
" To thy adorers: thou, with trembling fear,
" Or like a fawning parasite, obeyst,
" Then to thyself ascribest the truth foretold.
" But this thy glory shall be soon retrenched;
" No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
" The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceased,
" And thou no more with pomp or sacrifice
" Shalt be inquired at Delphos, or elsewhere;—
" At least, in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
" God hath now sent his Living Oracle
" Into the world, to teach his final will;
" And sends his Spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
" In pious hearts,—an inward oracle,
" To all truth requisite for men to know."
So spake our Saviour; but the subtle Fiend,
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembled, and this answer smooth returned:
" Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
" And urged me hard with doings, which not will,
" But misery hath wrested from me. Where
" Easily canst thou find one miserable,
" And not enforced ofttimes to part from truth,

" If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
" Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
" But thou art placed above me, thou art Lord;
" From thee I can, and must, submiss, endure
" Check or reproof, and glad to escape so quit.
" Hard are the ways of Truth, and rough to walk,
" Smooth on the tongue discoursed, pleasing to the ear,
" And tuneable as sylvan pipe or song.
" What wonder then if I delight to hear
" Her dictates from thy mouth? Most men admire
" Virtue, who follow not her lore: permit me
" To hear thee when I come, (since no man comes),
" And talk at least, though I despair to attain.
" Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,
" Suffers the hypocrite, or atheous priest
" To tread his sacred courts, and minister
" About his altar, handling holy things,
" Praying or vowing; and vouchsafed his voice
" To Balaam reprobate,—a prophet yet
" Inspired: disdain not such access to me."
To whom our Saviour, with unaltered brow:
" Thy coming hither—though I know thy scope—
" I bid not, nor forbid; do as thou findst
" Permission from above; thou canst not more."
He added not; and Satan, bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappeared,
Into thin air diffused: for now began
Night with her sullen wing, to double-shade
The desert; fowls in their clay nests were couched;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

Second Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE disciples of Jesus, uneasy at his long absence, reason amongst themselves concerning it. Mary also gives vent to her maternal anxiety; in the expression of which she recapitulates many circumstances respecting the birth and early life of her Son. Satan again meets his infernal council, reports the bad success of his first temptation of our blessed Lord, calls upon them for counsel and assistance. Belial proposes the tempting of Jesus with women. Satan rebukes Belial for his dissoluteness, charging on him all the profligacy of that kind ascribed by the poets to the heathen gods, and rejects his proposal as in no respect likely to succeed. Satan then suggests other modes of temptation, particularly proposing to avail himself of our Lord's hungering; and, taking a band of chosen spirits with him, returns to resume his enterprise. Jesus hungers in the desert: night comes on; the manner in which our Saviour passes the night is described. Morning advances: Satan again appears to Jesus; and, after expressing wonder that he should be so entirely neglected in the wilderness, where others had been miraculously fed, tempts him with a sumptuous banquet of the most luxurious kind: this he rejects, and the banquet vanishes. Satan, finding our Lord not to be assailed on the ground of appetite, tempts him again by offering him riches, as the means of acquiring power: this Jesus also rejects, producing many instances of great actions performed by persons under virtuous poverty, and specifying the danger of riches, and the cares and pains inseparable from power and greatness.

MEANWHILE the new-baptized, who yet remained
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him (whom they had so late expressly called
Jesus), Messiah, Son of God declared,
And on that high authority had believed,
And with him talked, and with him lodged; I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others though in Holy Writ not named;
Now missing him, their joy so lately found,—

So lately found, and so abruptly gone,—
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And, as the days increased, increased their doubt.
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
And for a time caught up to God—as once
Moses was in the mount and missing long;
And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels
Rode up to Heaven—yet once again to come.
Therefore, as those young prophets then with care
Sought lost Elijah; so in each place these,
Nigh to Bethabara; in Jericho
The city of palms, Ænon, and Salem old,
Machærus, and each town or city walled
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
Or in Peræa; but returned in vain.
Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek
Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play,
Plain fishermen, (no greater men them call)
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and plaints out breathed:
"Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
"Unlooked for are we fallen! our eyes beheld
"Messiah certainly now come,—so long
"Expected of our fathers; we have heard
"His words—his wisdom—full of grace and truth:
"Now—now, for sure—deliverance is at hand;
"The kingdom shall to Israel be restored:
"Thus we rejoiced, but soon our joy is turned
"Into perplexity and new amaze:
"For whither is he gone? what accident
"Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
"After appearance, and again prolong
"Our expectation? God of Israel,
"Send thy Messiah forth; the time is come!
"Behold the kings of the earth, how they oppress
"Thy chosen;—to what height their power unjust
"They have exalted, and behind them cast
"All fear of thee: arise, and vindicate
"Thy glory; free thy people from their yoke!
"But let us wait; thus far he hath performed,

" Sent his Anointed, and to us revealed him,
" By his great prophet, pointed at and shown
" In public, and with him we have conversed:
" Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
" Lay on his providence; he will not fail,
" Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
" Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence:
" Soon we shall see our hope, our joy, return."
Thus they, out of their plaints, new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought:
But, to his mother Mary, when she saw
Others returned from baptism,—not her Son,—
Nor left at Jordan,—tidings of him none;
Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and raised
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad:
" O, what avails me now that honour high
" To have conceived of God, or that salute,
" 'Hail, highly favoured, among women blest!'
" While I to sorrows am no less advanced,
" And fears as eminent, above the lot
" Of other women, by the birth I bore;
" In such a season born, when scarce a shed
" Could be obtained to shelter him or me
" From the bleak air; a stable was our warmth,
" A manger his; yet soon enforced to fly
" Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king
" Were dead, who sought his life, and missing filled
" With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem:
" From Egypt home returned, in Nazareth
" Hath been our dwelling many years; his life
" Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
" Little suspicious to any king; but now,
" Full grown to man,—acknowledged, as I hear,
" By John the Baptist, and in public shown,—
" Son owned from Heaven by his Father's voice,—
" I looked for some great change; to honour?—no;
" But trouble; as old Simeon plain foretold,
" That to the fall and rising he should be
" Of many in Israel, and to a sign

" Spoken against ; that through my very soul
" A sword shall pierce : this is my favoured lot—
" My exaltation to afflictions high :
" Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest !
" I will not argue that, nor will repine.
" But where delays he now ? Some great intent
" Conceals him : when twelve years he scarce had seen,
" I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
" He could not lose himself ; but went about
" His Father's business : what he meant I mused,—
" Since understand ; much more his absence now
" Thus long, to some great purpose, he obscures.
" But I to wait with patience am inured ;
" My heart hath been a storehouse long of things
" And sayings laid up, portending strange events."
Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had passed
Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly composed, awaited the fulfilling :
The while her Son, tracing the desert wild,
Sole, but with holiest meditations fed,
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work, to come, before him set ;—
How to begin,—how to accomplish best
His end of being on earth, and mission high :
For Satan, with sly preface to return,
Had left him vacant ; and with speed was gone
Up to the middle regions of thick air,
Where all his potentates in council sat :
There without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank, he thus began :
" Princes, Heaven's ancient Sons, ethereal Thrones !—
" Demonian Spirits now, from the element
" Each of his reign allotted, rightlier called
" Powers of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth beneath,
" So may we hold our place and these mild seats
" Without new trouble !—such an enemy
" Is risen to invade us, who no less
" Threatens than our expulsion down to Hell ;
" I, as I undertook, and with the vote

" Consenting in full frequence was empowered,
" Have found him, viewed him, tasted him; but find
" Far other labour to be undergone
" Than when I dealt with Adam, first of men
" (Though Adam by his wife's allurement fell),
" However to this man inferior far;—
" If he be man by mother's side at least,—
" With more than human gifts from Heaven adorned,
" Perfections absolute, graces divine,
" And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
" Therefore I am returned, lest confidence
" Of my success with Eve in Paradise
" Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
" Of like succeeding here: I summon all
" Rather to be in readiness, with hand
" Or council to assist; lest I, who erst
" Thought none my equal, now be overmatched."
So spake the old serpent, doubting; and from all,
With clamour, was assured their utmost aid
At his command: when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissolutest spirit that fell!—
The sensuallest; and after Asmodai,
The fleshliest incubus; and thus advised:
" Set women in his eye, and in his walk,—
" Among daughters of men the fairest found:
" Many are in each region passing fair
" As the noon sky; more like to Goddesses
" Than mortal creatures; graceful and discreet;
" Expert in amorous arts—enchanting tongues
" Persuasive—virgin majesty, with mild
" And sweet allayed, yet terrible to approach—
" Skilled to retire, and, in retiring, draw
" Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.
" Such object hath the power to soften and tame
" Severest temper, smooth the ruggedest brow,
" Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
" Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
" At will the manliest, resolutest breast,
" As the magnetic hardest iron draws.
" Women, when nothing else, beguiled the heart

" Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,—
" And made him bow, to the Gods of his wives."
To whom quick answer Satan thus returned:
" Belial! in much uneven scale thou weighst
" All others by thyself; because, of old,
" Thou thyself doatst on womankind, admiring
" Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,
" None are, thou thinkst, but taken with such toys.
" Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew—
" False titled Sons of God—roaming the earth,
" Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
" And coupled with them, and begot a race.
" Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
" In courts and regal chambers how thou lurkst,
" In wood or grove, by mossy fountain side,
" In valley or green meadow, to waylay
" Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
" Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
" Or Amymone, Syrinx,—many more
" Too long; then layst thy scapes on names adored,
" Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,
" Satyr, or Faun, or Sylvan? But these haunts
" Delight not all: among the sons of men,
" How many have, with a smile, made small account
" Of beauty and her lures, easily scorned
" All her assaults, on worthier things intent!
" Remember that Pelléan conqueror—
" A youth,—how all the beauties of the East
" He slightly viewed, and slightly overpassed;
" How he, surnamed of Africa, dismissed,
" In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid.
" For Solomon, he lived at ease; and, full
" Of honour, wealth, high fare, aimed not beyond
" Higher design than to enjoy his state;
" Thence to the bait of women lay exposed:
" But he, whom we attempt, is wiser far
" Than Solomon,—of more exalted mind,—
" Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
" Of greatest things. What woman will you find,
" Though of this age the wonder and the fame,

" On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
" Of fond desire? Or should she, confident,
" As sitting, queen adored, on beauty's throne,
" Descend, with all her winning charms begirt,
" To enamour, as the zone of Venus once
" Wrought that effect on Jove (so fables tell),
" How would one look from his majestic brow,
" Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,
" Discountenance her despised, and put to rout
" All her array; her female pride deject,
" Or turn to reverent awe! for Beauty stands
" In the admiration only of weak minds,
" Led captive;—cease to admire, and all her plumes
" Fall flat, and shrink into a trivial toy,
" At every sudden slighting quite abashed.
" Therefore with manlier objects we must try
" His constancy; with such as have more show
" Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise;—
" Rocks, whereon greatest men have oftest wrecked;—
" Or that which only seems to satisfy
" Lawful desires of nature, not beyond:
" And now I know he hungers, where no food
" Is to be found, in the wide wilderness:
" The rest commit to me; I shall let pass
" No advantage, and his strength as oft assay."
He ceased, and heard their grant in loud acclaim;
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of Spirits, likest to himself in guile,
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons, each to know his part;
Then to the desert takes with these his flight;
Where still from shade to shade the Son of God,
After forty days' fasting, had remained,
Now hungering first, and to himself thus said:
" Where will this end? four times ten days I've passed
" Wandering this woody maze, and human food
" Nor tasted, nor had appetite; that fast
" To virtue I impute not, or count part
" Of what I suffer here; if nature need not,

" Or God support nature without repast
" Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
" But now I feel I hunger, which declares
" Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
" Can satisfy that need some other way,
" Though hunger still remain: so it remain
" Without this body's wasting, I content me,
" And from the sting of famine fear no harm;
" Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts, that feed
" Me hungering more to do my Father's will."

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
Communed in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh
Of trees thick interwoven; there he slept,
And dreamed—as appetite is wont to dream—
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet:
Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn,
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought;
He saw the prophet also, how he fled
Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper; then how, awaked,
He found his supper on the coals prepared,
And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof sufficed him forty days:
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

Thus wore out night; and now the herald lark
Left his ground-nest, high towering to descry
The Morn's approach, and greet her with his song:
As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream;—
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting waked.
Up to a hill anon his steps he reared,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote, none he saw;
Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,

With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud :
Thither he bent his way, determined there
To rest at noon; and entered soon the shade
High roofed, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
That opened in the midst—a woody scene :
Nature's own work it seemed (Nature taught Art),
And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt
Of Wood-gods and Wood-nymphs : he viewed it round;
When suddenly a man before him stood;
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city, or court, or palace bred;
And with fair speech these words to him addressed :
" With granted leave officious I return;
" But much more wonder that the Son of God
" In this wild solitude so long should bide,
" Of all things destitute; and, well I know,
" Not without hunger. Others of some note,
" As story tells, have trod this wilderness;
" The fugitive bond-woman, with her son,
" Outcast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
" By a providing Angel; all the race
" Of Israel here had famished, had not God
" Rained from Heaven manna; and that prophet bold,
" Native of Thebez, wandering here was fed
" Twice by a voice inviting him to eat.
" Of thee these forty days none hath regard,—
" Forty and more deserted here indeed!"
To whom thus Jesus :
" What concludest thou hence?
" They all had need; I, as thou seest, have none."
" How hast thou hunger then?" Satan replied.
" Tell me, if food were now before thee set,
" Wouldst thou not eat?"
" Thereafter as I like
" The giver," answered Jesus.
" Why should that
" Cause thy refusal?" said the subtle Fiend :
" Hast thou not right to all created things?
" Owe not all creatures, by just right, to thee
" Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,

" But tender all their power? Nor mention I
" Meats by the law unclean, or offered first
" To idols; those young Daniel could refuse:
" Nor proffered by an enemy; though who
" Would scruple that, with want oppressed? Behold,
" Nature ashamed, or, better to express,
" Troubled, that thou shouldst hunger, hath purveyed
" From all the elements her choicest store,
" To treat thee, as beseems,—and as her Lord,—
" With honour: only deign to sit and eat."
He spake no dream; for, as his words had end,
Our Saviour, lifting up his eyes, beheld,
In ample space under the broadest shade,
A table richly spread,—in regal mode,—
With dishes piled, and meats of noblest sort
And savour; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
Gris-amber-steamed; all fish, from sea or shore,
Freshet or purling brook, of shell or fin,
And exquisitest name, for which was drained
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast:
(Alas, how simple, to these cates compared,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve!)
And at a stately sideboard, by the wine,
That fragrant smell diffused, in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymed or Hylas; distant more
Under the trees now tripped, now solemn stood,
Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,
And ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed
Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since
Of fairy damsels, met in the forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.
And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings, or charming pipes; and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fanned
From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.—
Such was the splendour; and the Tempter now

His invitation earnestly renewed:
"What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
"These are not fruits forbidden; no interdict
"Defends the touching of these viands pure:
"Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil;
"But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
"Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
"All these are Spirits of air, and woods, and springs,—
"Thy gentle ministers,—who come to pay
"Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord.
"What doubtst thou, Son of God? sit down, and eat."
To whom thus Jesus temperately replied:
"Saidst thou not that to all things I had right?
"And who withholds my power that right to use?
"Shall I receive by gift, what of my own,
"When and where likes me best, I can command?
"I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
"Command a table in this wilderness,
"And call swift flights of Angels ministrant,
"Arrayed in glory, on my cup to attend:
"Why shouldst thou then obtrude this diligence,
"In vain, where no acceptance it can find?
"And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
"Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
"And count thy specious gifts no gifts,—but guiles."
To whom thus answered Satan malcontent:
"That I have also power to give, thou seest;
"If of that power I bring thee voluntary
"What I might have bestowed on whom I pleased,
"And rather, opportunely in this place,
"Choose to impart to thy apparent need,
"Why shouldst thou not accept it? But I see,
"What I can do or offer is suspect;
"Of these things others quickly will dispose,
"Whose pains have earned the far-fet spoil." With that,
Both table and provision vanished quite
With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard:
Only the importune Tempter still remained,
And with these words his temptation pursued:
"By hunger, that each other creature tames,

" Thou art not to be harmed; therefore not moved;
" Thy temperance invincible, besides,
" For no allurement yields to appetite;
" And all thy heart is set on high designs—
" High actions:—but wherewith to be achieved?
" Great acts require great means of enterprise:
" Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
" A carpenter thy father known, thyself
" Bred up in poverty and straits at home;—
" Lost in a desert here—and hunger-bit.
" Which way, or from what hope, dost thou aspire
" To greatness? whence authority derivest?
" What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
" Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,
" Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
" Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms:
" What raised Antipater the Edomite,
" And his son Herod placed on Judah's throne,
" (Thy throne,) but gold, that got him puissant friends?
" Therefore, if at great things thou wouldst arrive,
" Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap,—
" Not difficult, if thou hearken to me:
" Riches are mine; Fortune is in my hand:
" They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain;
" While Virtue, Valour, Wisdom, sit in want."
To whom thus Jesus patiently replied:
" Yet wealth, without these three, is impotent
" To gain dominion, or to keep it gained.
" Witness those ancient empires of the earth,
" In height of all their flowing wealth dissolved:
" But men endued with these have oft attained,
" In lowest poverty, to highest deeds;
" Gideon, and Jephthah, and the shepherd lad,
" Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat
" So many ages, and shall yet regain
" That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
" Among the Heathen, (for throughout the world
" To me is not unknown what hath been done
" Worthy of memorial,) canst thou not remember
" Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?

" For I esteem those names of men so poor,
" Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
" Riches, though offered from the hand of kings.
" And what in me seems wanting, but that I
" May also, in this poverty, as soon
" Accomplish what they did, perhaps, and more?
" Extol not riches then,—the toil of fools,
" The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare;—more apt
" To slacken Virtue, and abate her edge,
" Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.
" What if with like aversion I reject
" Riches and realms? yet not, for that a crown,
" Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,—
" Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights,
" To him who wears the regal diadem.
" When on his shoulders each man's burden lies;—
" For therein stands the office of a king;
" His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise;
" That for the public all this weight he bears.
" Yet he, who reigns within himself, and rules
" Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king;
" Which every wise and virtuous man attains:
" And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
" Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes,
" Subject himself to anarchy within,
" Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.
" But to guide nations in the way of truth
" By saving doctrine, and from error lead
" To know, and knowing worship God aright,—
" Is yet more kingly; this attracts the soul,
" Governs the inner man, the nobler part:
" That other o'er the body only reigns,
" And oft by force; which, to a generous mind,
" So reigning, can be no sincere delight.
" Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
" Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
" Far more magnanimous, than to assume!
" Riches are needless then, both for themselves,
" And for thy reason why they should be sought,—
" To gain a sceptre, oftest better missed."

Third Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

SATAN, in a speech of much flattering commendation, endeavours to awaken in Jesus a passion for glory, by particularizing various instances of conquests achieved, and great actions performed, by persons at an early period of life. Our Lord replies, by showing the vanity of worldly fame, and the improper means by which it is generally attained; and contrasts with it the true glory of religious patience, and virtuous wisdom, as exemplified in the character of Job. Satan justifies the love of glory from the example of God himself, who requires it from all his creatures. Jesus detects the fallacy of this argument, by showing that as goodness is the true ground on which glory is due to the great Creator of all things, sinful man can have no right whatever to it. Satan then urges our Lord respecting his claim to the throne of David: he tells him, that the kingdom of Judea, being at that time a province of Rome, cannot be got possession of without much personal exertion on his part, and presses him to lose no time in beginning to reign. Jesus refers him to the time allotted for this, as for all other things; and, after intimating somewhat respecting his own previous sufferings, asks Satan why he was so solicitous for the exaltation of one whose rising was destined to be his fall. Satan replies, that his own desperate state, by excluding all hope, leaves little room for fear; and that, as his own punishment was equally doomed, he is not interested in preventing the reign of one, from whose apparent benevolence he might rather hope for some interference in his favour. Satan still pursues his former incitements; and, supposing that the seeming reluctance of Jesus to be thus advanced might arise from his being unacquainted with the world and its glories, conveys him to the summit of a high mountain, and from thence shows him most of the kingdoms of Asia, particularly pointing out to his notice some extraordinary military preparations of the Parthians to resist the incursions of the Scythians. He then informs our Lord, that he showed him this purposely, that he might see how necessary military exertions are to retain the possession of kingdoms, as well as to subdue them at first; and advises him to consider how impossible it was to maintain Judea against two such powerful neighbours as the Romans and Parthians, and how necessary it would be to form an alliance with one or other of

them. He recommends, and engages to secure to him, that of the Parthians; and tells him that by this means his power will be defended against any attempt of Rome, that he will be able to extend his glory wide, and even accomplish, what alone would make his throne the throne of David, the restoration of the ten tribes, still in captivity. Jesus, having noticed the vanity of military efforts or of the arm of flesh, says, that at the appointed time for ascending his allotted throne he shall not be slack; remarks on Satan's zeal for the deliverance of the Israelites, whose constant enemy he had been; declares their servitude to be the reward of their idolatry; but adds, that at a future time it may perhaps please God to restore them to liberty and their country.

So spake the Son of God; and Satan stood
Awhile, as mute, confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted, and convinced
Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift:
At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,
With soothing words renewed, him thus accosts:
"I see thou knowest what is of use to know,
"What best to say canst say, to do canst do;
"Thy actions to thy words accord; thy words
"To thy large heart give utterance due; thy heart
"Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
"Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,
"Thy counsel would be as the oracle
"Urim and Thummim,—those oraculous gems
"On Aaron's breast; or tongue of seers old
"Infallible: or wert thou sought to deeds
"That might require the array of war, thy skill
"Of conduct would be such, that all the world
"Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
"In battle, though against thy few in arms.
"These godlike virtues wherefore dost thou hide,
"Affecting private life, or more obscure
"In savage wilderness? Wherefore deprive
"All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
"The fame and glory?—glory, the reward
"That sole excites to high attempts, the flame
"Of most erected spirits, most tempered pure
"Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
"All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
"And dignities and powers all but the highest!

" Thy years are ripe and over-ripe; the son
" Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
" Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
" At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down
" The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey, quelled
" The Pontic king, and in triúmph had rode.
" Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
" Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
" Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
" The more he grew in years, the more inflamed
" With glory, wept that he had lived so long
" Inglorious:—but thou yet art not too late."
To whom our Saviour calmly thus replied:
" Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
" For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
" For glory's sake, by all thy argument.
" For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
" The people's praise?—if always praise unmixed—
" And what the people but a herd confused,
" A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
" Things vulgar, and, well weighed, scarce worth the praise?
" They praise, and they admire, they know not what,
" And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
" And what delight to be by such extolled;
" To live upon their tongues, and be their talk,
" Of whom to be dispraised were no small praise?—
" His lot who dares be singularly good!
" The intelligent among them, and the wise,
" Are few, and glory scarce of few is raised.
" This is true glory and renown;—when God,
" Looking on the earth, with approbation marks
" The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
" To all his angels, who, with true applause,
" Recount his praises: thus he did to Job,
" When, to extend his fame through Heaven and Earth,
" As thou to thy reproach mayest well remember,
" He asked thee, 'Hast thou seen my servant Job?'
" Famous he was in Heaven, on Earth less known;—
" Where glory is false glory,—attributed
" To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.

" They err, who count it glorious to subdue
" By conquest far and wide, to overrun
" Large countries, and in field great battles win,
" Great cities by assault: what do these worthies,
" But rob, and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
" Peaceable nations, neighbouring or remote,—
" Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
" Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
" Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
" And all the flourishing works of peace destroy;
" Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,
" Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,
" Worshipped with temple, priest, and sacrifice?
" One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;
" Till conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
" Rolling in brutish vices, and deformed,—
" Violent or shameful death their due reward.
" But if there be in glory aught of good,
" It may by means far different be attained,
" Without ambition, war, or violence;—
" By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
" By patience, temperance:—I mention still
" Him, whom thy wrongs, with saintly patience borne,
" Made famous in a land and times obscure:
" Who names not now with honour patient Job?
" Poor Socrates, (who next more memorable?)
" By what he taught, and suffered for so doing,—
" For truth's sake suffering death unjust,—lives now
" Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.
" Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
" Aught suffered; if young African for fame
" His wasted country freed from Punic rage;
" The deed becomes unpraised,—the man at least,—
" And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
" Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek,
" Oft not deserved?—I seek not mine, but his
" Who sent me; and thereby witness whence I am."
To whom the Tempter murmuring thus replied:
" Think not so slight of glory; therein least
" Resembling thy great Father: he seeks glory,

" And for his glory all things made, all things
" Orders and governs; not content in Heaven
" By all his angels glorified, requires
" Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,
" Wise or unwise,—no difference, no exemption:
" Above all sacrifice or hallowed gift,
" Glory he requires, and glory he receives,
" Promiscuous from all nations, Jew or Greek,
" Or barbarous, nor exception hath declared:
" From us, his foes pronounced, glory he exacts."
To whom our Saviour fervently replied:
" And reason; since his Word all things produced,
" Though chiefly—not for glory as prime end,—
" But to show forth his goodness, and impart
" His good communicable to every soul
" Freely; of whom what could he less expect
" Than glory and benediction, that is, thanks?—
" The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
" From them who could return him nothing else;
" And, not returning that, would likeliest render
" Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy—
" Hard recompense, unsuitable return
" For so much good, so much beneficence!
" But why should man seek glory, who of his own
" Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs,
" But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?—
" Who, for so many benefits received,
" Turned recreant to God, ingrate and false,
" And so of all true good himself despoiled:
" Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
" That which to God alone of right belongs:
" Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
" That who advance his glory, not their own,
" Them he himself to glory will advance."
So spake the Son of God: and here again
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin; for he himself,
Insatiable of glory, had lost all:
Yet of another plea bethought him soon.
" Of glory, as thou wilt," said he, " so deem;

" Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass.
" But to a kingdom thou art born—ordained
" To sit upon thy father David's throne,
" By mother's side thy father; though thy right
" Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
" Easily from possession won with arms:
" Judea now and all the Promised Land,
" Reduced a province under Roman yoke,
" Obeys Tiberius: nor is always ruled
" With temperate sway: oft have they violated
" The temple, oft the law, with foul affronts,—
" Abominations rather,—as did once
" Antiochus: and thinkst thou to regain
" Thy right, by sitting still, or thus retiring?
" So did not Maccabéus: he indeed
" Retired into the desert, but with arms;
" And o'er a mighty king so oft prevailed,
" That by strong hand his family obtained,
" Though priests, the crown, and David's throne usurped,
" With Modin and her suburbs once content.
" If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
" And duty; zeal and duty are not slow,
" But on Occasion's forelock watchful wait:
" They themselves rather are occasion best;—
" Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free
" Thy country from her Heathen servitude.
" So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify
" The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign;—
" The happier reign, the sooner it begins:
" Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?"
To whom our Saviour answer thus returned:
" All things are best fulfilled in their due time;
" And 'Time there is for all things,' Truth hath said.
" If of my reign Prophetic Writ hath told,
" That it shall never end; so, when begin,
" The Father in his purpose hath decreed;—
" He, in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
" What if he hath decreed that I shall first
" Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
" By tribulations, injuries, insults,

" Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,—
" Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,
" Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
" What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
" Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
" Well hath obeyed;—just trial, ere I merit
" My exaltation without change or end.
" But what concerns it thee when I begin
" My everlasting kingdom? Why art thou
" Solicitous? What moves thy inquisition? 200
" Knowst thou not that my rising is thy fall,
" And my promotion will be thy destruction?"
To whom the Tempter, inly racked, replied:
" Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
" Of my reception into grace: what worse?
" For where no hope is left, is left no fear:
" If there be worse, the expectation more,
" Of worse, torments me than the feeling can.
" I would be at the worst: worst is my port,
" My harbour, and my ultimate repose— 210
" The end I would attain—my final good!
" My error was my error, and my crime
" My crime; whatever, for itself condemned;
" And will alike be punished, whether thou
" Reign or reign not; though to that gentle brow
" Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,—
" From that placid aspect and meek regard,—
" Rather than aggravate my evil state,
" Would stand between me and thy Father's ire,
" (Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell), 220
" A shelter, and a kind of shading cool
" Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
" If I then to the worst that can be haste,
" Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
" Happiest, both to thyself and all the world,—
" That thou, who worthiest art, shouldst be their king?
" Perhaps thou lingerst in deep thoughts detained
" Of the enterprise so hazardous and high!
" No wonder; for, though in thee be united
" What of perfection can in man be found, 230

" Or human nature can receive, consider,
" Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
" At home,—scarce viewed the Galilean towns,—
" And once a year Jerusalem, few days'
" Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?
" The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
" Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,—
" Best school of best experience, quickest insight
" In all things that to greatest actions lead.
" The wisest, unexperienced, will be ever
" Timorous and loth, with novice modesty,
" (As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom),
" Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous:
" But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
" Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
" The monarchies of the Earth, their pomp and state;—
" Sufficient introduction to inform
" Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts
" And regal mysteries; that thou mayst know
" How best their opposition to withstand."
With that (such power was given him then) he took
The Son of God up to a mountain high.
It was a mountain, at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain, outstretched in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flowed,
The one winding, the other straight, and left between
Fair champain with less rivers interveined,
Then meeting joined their tribute to the sea:
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine;
With herds the pastures thronged, with flocks the hills;
Huge cities and high-towered, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs; and so large
The prospect was, that here and there was room
For barren desert, fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain top the Tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began:
" Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
" Forest and field and flood, temples and towers,
" Cut shorter many a league: here thou beholdst
" Assyria, and her empire's ancient bounds,—

" Araxes and the Caspian lake; thence on
" As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
" And oft beyond: to south the Persian bay,
" And, inaccessible, the Arabian drought:
" Here Nineveh, of length within her wall
" Several days' journey, built by Ninus old,
" Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
" And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
" Israel in long captivity still mourns:
" There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues,
" As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
" Judah and all thy father David's house
" Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
" Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis,
" His city, there thou seest, and Bactra there;
" Ecbatana her structure vast there shows,
" And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;
" There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
" The drink of none but kings; of later fame,
" Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands,
" The great Seleucia, Nisibis; and there
" Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon,
" Turning with easy eye, thou mayst behold.
" All these the Parthian (now some ages past,
" By great Arsaces led, who founded first
" That empire) under his dominion holds,
" From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.
" And just in time thou comest to have a view
" Of his great power; for now the Parthian king
" In Ctesiphon hath gathered all his host
" Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
" Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
" He marches now in haste: see, though from far,
" His thousands in what martial equipage
" They issue forth,—steel bows and shafts their arms,—
" Of equal dread in flight or in pursuit;
" All horsemen, in which fight they most excel:
" See how in warlike muster they appear,
" In rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings."
He looked, and saw what numbers numberless

The city gates out-poured, light-armed troops
In coats of mail and military pride;
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound;
From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales;
From Atropatia and the neighbouring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south
Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.
He saw them in their forms of battle ranged,
How quick they wheeled, and, flying, behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight:
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown:
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots, or elephants indorsed with towers
Of archers; nor of labouring pioneers
A multitude, with spades and axes armed,
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke:
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
And waggons fraught with útensils of war.
Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,—
The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
The fairest of her sex Angelica,
His daughter,—sought by many prowest knights,
Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemain.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry:
At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presumed,
And to our Saviour thus his words renewed:
" That thou mayst know I seek not to engage
" Thy virtue, and not every way secure,
" On no slight grounds, thy safety; hear, and mark,
" To what end I have brought thee hither, and shown

"All this fair sight: thy kingdom, though foretold
"By prophet or by angel, unless thou
"Endeavour, as thy father David did,
"Thou never shalt obtain; prediction still
"In all things, and all men, supposes means;—
"Without means used, what it predicts revokes.
"But, say thou wert possessed of David's throne,
"By free consent of all, none opposite,
"Samaritan or Jew; how couldst thou hope
"Long to enjoy it, quiet and secure,
"Between two such enclosing enemies,
"Roman and Parthian? Therefore one of these
"Thou must make sure thy own;—the Parthian first
"By my advice, as nearer, and of late
"Found able by invasion to annoy
"Thy country, and captive lead away her kings,
"Antigonus and old Hyrcanus, bound,
"Maugre the Roman: it shall be my task
"To render thee the Parthian at dispose;
"Choose which thou wilt,—by conquest or by league.
"By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
"That which alone can truly reinstall thee
"In David's royal seat, his true successor,—
"Deliverance of thy brethren, those ten tribes,
"Whose offspring in his territory yet serve,
"In Habor, and among the Medes dispersed:
"Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost
"Thus long from Israel, serving, as of old
"Their fathers in the land of Egypt served,
"This offer sets before thee to deliver.
"These if from servitude thou shalt restore
"To their inheritance, then—nor till then,—
"Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
"From Egypt to Euphrates, and beyond,
"Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear."
To whom our Saviour answered thus, unmoved:
"Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm
"And fragile arms, much instrument of war,—
"Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,—
"Before mine eyes thou hast set; and in my ear

" Vented much policy, and projects deep,
" Of enemies, of aids, battles, and leagues,—
" Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.
" Means I must use, thou sayst; prediction else
" Will unpredict, and fail me of the throne.
" My time, I told thee,—and that time for thee
" Were better farthest off,—is not yet come:
" When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
" On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
" Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
" Luggage of war there shown me,—argument
" Of human weakness rather than of strength.
" My brethren, as thou callst them, those ten tribes
" I must deliver, if I mean to reign
" David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway
" To just extent over all Israel's sons!
" But whence to thee this zeal? where was it then
" For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
" When thou stoodst up his tempter to the pride
" Of numbering Israel, which cost the lives
" Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
" By three days' pestilence?—Such was thy zeal
" To Israel then; the same that now to me!
" As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
" Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
" From God to worship calves, the deities
" Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
" And all the idolatries of Heathen round,
" Besides their other worse than Heathenish crimes;
" Nor in the land of their captivity
" Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
" The God of their forefathers; but so died
" Impenitent, and left a race behind
" Like to themselves,—distinguishable scarce
" From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain;
" And God with idols in their worship joined.
" Should I of these the liberty regard,
" Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
" Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreformed,
" Headlong would follow; and to their gods perhaps

" Of Bethel and of Dan?—No; let them serve
" Their enemies, who serve idols with God.
" Yet he at length,—time to himself best known,—
" Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call
" May bring them back, repentant and sincere,
" And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,
" While to their native land with joy they haste;
" As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
" When to the Promised Land their fathers passed:
" To his due time and providence I leave them."
So spake Israel's true King, and to the Fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.—
So fares it, when with truth falsehood contends.

Fourth Book.

THE ARGUMENT.

Satan, persisting in the temptation of our Lord, shows him Imperial Rome in its greatest splendour, as a power which he probably would prefer before that of the Parthians; and tells him that he might with ease expel Tiberius, restore the Romans to their liberty, and make himself master not only of the Roman Empire, but, by so doing, of the whole world, and inclusively of the throne of David. Our Lord, in reply, expresses his contempt of grandeur and worldly power: notices the luxury, vanity, and profligacy of the Romans, declaring how little they merited to be restored to that liberty which they had lost by their misconduct; and briefly refers to the greatness of his own future kingdom. Satan, now desperate, to enhance the value of his proffered gifts, professes that the only terms on which he will bestow them, are our Saviour's falling down and worshipping him. Our Lord expresses a firm but temperate indignation at such a proposition, and rebukes the Tempter by the title of "Satan for ever damned." Satan, abashed, attempts to justify himself: he then assumes a new ground of temptation: and, proposing to Jesus the intellectual gratifications of wisdom and knowledge, points out to him the celebrated seat of ancient learning, Athens, and her schools: accompanying the view with a highly finished panegyric on the Grecian musicians, poets, orators, and philosophers. Jesus replies, by showing the vanity of their boasted philosophy: and prefers to the music, poetry, eloquence, and didactic policy of the Greeks, those of the inspired Hebrew writers. Satan, irritated at the failure of all his attempts, upbraids the indiscretion of our Saviour in rejecting his offers; and having, in ridicule of his expected kingdom, foretold our Lord's future sufferings, carries him back into the wilderness, and leaves him there. Night comes on: Satan raises a violent tempest, and attempts further, but in vain, to alarm Jesus with frightful dreams, and threatening spectres. A calm and beautiful morning succeeds to the horrors of the night. Satan again presents himself, and, noticing the storm of the preceding night as pointed chiefly at our Lord, once more insults him with an account of the sufferings which he was certainly to undergo. This only draws from our Lord a brief rebuke. Satan, now at the height of his desperation, confesses that he

had frequently watched Jesus from his birth, in order to discover if he was the true Messiah; and, collecting from what passed at the river Jordan that he most probably was so, he had from that time more assiduously followed him, in hopes of gaining some advantage over him, which would prove him to be not the Divine Person destined to be his "fatal enemy." In this he acknowledges that he has hitherto completely failed; but still determines to make one more trial of him. Accordingly, he conveys him to the temple at Jerusalem; and, placing him on a pointed eminence, requires him to prove his divinity either by standing there, or casting himself down with safety. Our Lord reproves the Tempter, and at the same time manifests his own divinity by standing on the dangerous point. Satan, amazed and terrified, instantly falls; and repairs to his infernal compeers to relate his bad success. Angels meanwhile convey our Lord to a beautiful valley, minister to him a repast of celestial food, and celebrate his victory in a triumphant hymn.

PERPLEXED and troubled at his bad success
The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,—
Discovered in his fraud,—thrown from his hope
So oft,—and the persuasive rhetoric
That sleeked his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
So little here,—nay, lost: but Eve was Eve;
This, far his over-match, who, self-deceived
And rash, beforehand had no better weighed
The strength he was to cope with, or his own:
But as a man, who had been matchless held
In cunning, overreached where least he thought,
To salve his credit, and for very spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more;
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
About the wine-press where sweet must is poured,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dashed, the assault renew,—
Vain battery!—and in froth or bubbles end;—
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er, though desperate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.
He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long, but in breadth not wide,

Washed by the southern sea; and, on the north,
To equal length backed with a ridge of hills,
That screened the fruits of the earth, and seats of men,
From cold Septentrion blasts; thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With towers and temples proudly elevate
On seven small hills, with palaces adorned,
Porches, and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues, and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
Gardens, and groves,—presented to his eyes,
Above the height of mountains interposed: —
By what strange parallax, or optic skill
Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass
Of telescope, were curious to inquire.—
And now the Tempter thus his silence broke:
" The city, which thou seest, no other deem
" Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the Earth,
" So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched
" Of nations: there the Capitol thou seest,
" Above the rest lifting his stately head
" On the Tarpeian rock,—her citadel
" Impregnable; and there Mount Palatine,
" The imperial palace, compass huge, and high
" The structure, skill of noblest architects,
" With gilded battlements conspicuous far,
" Turrets, and terraces, and glittering spires:
" Many a fair edifice besides, more like
" Houses of Gods, (so well I have disposed
" My airy microscope,) thou mayst behold,
" Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs,
" Carved work, the hand of famed artificers,
" In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold.
" Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
" What conflux issuing forth, or entering in;
" Prætors, Proconsuls, to their provinces
" Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;
" Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power,
" Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings:
" Or embassies from regions far remote,

" In various habits, on the Appian road,
" Or on the Emilian; some from farthest south,
" Syene, and, where the shadow both way falls,
" Meroë, Nilotic isle; and, more to west,
" The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea;—
" From the Asian kings, and Parthian among these;—
" From India and the golden Chersonese,
" And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
" Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed;—
" From Gallia, Gades, and the British west;—
" Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians, north
" Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.
" All nations now to Rome obedience pay;
" To Rome's great emperor, whose wide domain,
" In ample territory, wealth, and power,
" Civility of manners, arts, and arms,
" And long renown, thou justly mayst prefer
" Before the Parthian; these two thrones except,
" The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
" Shared among petty kings too far removed:
" These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
" The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
" This emperor hath no son, and now is old,—
" Old and lascivious, and from Rome retired
" To Capreæ, an island small, but strong,
" On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
" His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
" Committing to a wicked favourite
" All public cares, and yet of him suspicious,—
" Hated of all, and hating. With what ease,
" Endued with regal virtues as thou art,
" Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
" Mightst thou expel this monster from his throne,
" Now made a sty; and, in his place ascending,
" A victor people free from servile yoke!
" And with my help thou mayst; to me the power
" Is given, and by that right I give it thee.
" Aim therefore at no less than all the world;
" Aim at the highest: without the highest attained,
" Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,

" On David's throne,—be prophesied what will."
To whom the Son of God, unmoved, replied:
" Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
" Of luxury, though called magnificence,
" More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
" Much less my mind; though thou shouldst add to tell
" Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
" On citron tables or Atlantic stone,
" (For I have also heard, perhaps have read);
" Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
" Chios, and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,
" Crystal, and myrrhine cups, embossed with gems
" And studs of pearl;—to me shouldst tell, who thirst
" And hunger still. Then embassies thou showst
" From nations far and nigh: what honour that,
" But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear
" So many hollow compliments and lies,
" Outlandish flatteries? Then proceedst to talk
" Of the emperor, how easily subdued,
" How gloriously! I shall, thou sayst, expel
" A brutish monster:—what if I withal
" Expel a devil who first made him such?
" Let his tormentor, Conscience, find him out;
" For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
" That people, victor once, now vile and base;
" Deservedly made vassal; who, once just,
" Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquered well,
" But govern ill the nations under yoke,
" Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
" By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
" Of triumph,—that insulting vanity;
" Then cruel, by their sports to blood inured
" Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts exposed;
" Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
" And from the daily scene effeminate.
" What wise and valiant man would seek to free
" These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved?
" Or could of inward slaves make outward free?
" Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit
" On David's throne, it shall be like a tree

" Spreading and overshadowing all the earth;
" Or as a stone, that shall to pieces dash
" All monarchies besides throughout the world;
" And of my kingdom there shall be no end:
" Means there shall be to this; but what the means,
" Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell."
To whom the Tempter, impudent, replied:
" I see all offers made by me how slight
" Thou valuest, because offered, and rejectst:
" Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
" Or nothing more than still to contradict:
" On the other side, know also thou, that I
" On what I offer set as high esteem,
" Nor what I part with mean to give for naught:
" All these, which in a moment thou beholdst,
" The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give,—
" For, given to me, I give to whom I please—
" No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else,—
" On this condition;—if thou wilt fall down,
" And worship me as thy superior lord,
" (Easily done,) and hold them all of me;
" For what can less so great a gift deserve?"
Whom thus our Saviour answered with disdain:
" I never liked thy talk, thy offers less;—
" Now both abhor, since thou hast dared to utter
" The abominable terms, —impious condition:
" But I endure the time, till which expired
" Thou hast permission on me. It is written,
" The first of all commandments, 'Thou shalt worship
" The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve;'
" And darest thou to the Son of God propound
" To worship thee accursed? now more accursed
" For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve,
" And more blasphemous; which expect to rue.
" The kingdoms of the world to thee were given!
" Permitted rather, and by thee usurped;
" Other donation none thou canst produce.
" If given, by whom but by the King of kings,
" God over all supreme? If given to thee,
" By thee how fairly is the Giver now

" Repaid! But gratitude in thee is lost
" Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame
" As offer them to me, the Son of God,
" To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
" That I fall down and worship thee as God?—
" Get thee behind me; plain thou now appearst
" That evil one,—Satan for ever damned."
To whom the Fiend, with fear abashed, replied:
" Be not so sore offended, Son of God!—
" Though sons of God both angels are and men,—
" If I, to try whether in higher sort
" Than these thou bearst that title, have proposed
" What both from men and angels I receive,—
" Tetrarchs of Fire, Air, Flood, and on the Earth,—
" Nations besides from all the quartered winds,—
" God of this world invoked, and world beneath:
" Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
" To me most fatal, me it most concerns:
" The trial hath indamaged thee no way,
" Rather more honour left, and more esteem;
" Me naught advantaged, missing what I aimed.
" Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
" The kingdoms of this world; I shall no more
" Advise thee; gain them as thou canst, or not:
" And thou thyself seemst otherwise inclined
" Than to a worldly crown; addicted more
" To contemplation and profound dispute;
" As by that early action may be judged,
" When, slipping from thy mother's eye, thou wentst
" Alone into the Temple; there wast found
" Among the gravest Rabbis, disputant
" On points and questions fitting Moses' chair,
" Teaching, not taught; the childhood shows the man,
" As morning shows the day. Be famous then
" By wisdom; as thy empire must extend,
" So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
" In knowledge,—all things in it comprehend.
" All knowledge is not couched in Moses' law,
" The Pentateuch, or what the Prophets wrote:
" The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach

" To admiration, led by Nature's light;
" And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
" Ruling them by persuasion, as thou meanst.
" Without their learning, how wilt thou with them,
" Or they with thee, hold conversation meet?
" How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
" Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes?
" Error by his own arms is best evinced.
" Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,
" Westward, much nearer by south-west, behold!
" Where on the Ægean shore a city stands,
" Built nobly; pure the air, and light the soil;
" Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
" And eloquence, native to famous wits,
" Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
" City or suburban, studious walks and shades.
" See there the olive grove of Academe,
" Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
" Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;
" There flowery hill Hymettus, with the sound
" Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
" To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
" His whispering stream: within the walls then view
" The schools of ancient sages;—his, who bred
" Great Alexander to subdue the world,—
" Lyceum there,—and painted Stoa next:—
" There shalt thou hear and learn the secret power
" Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
" By voice or hand; and various measured verse,
" Æolian charms, and Dorian lyric odes,
" And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
" Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer called,
" Whose poem Phœbus challenged for his own:
" Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
" In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best
" Of moral prudence,—with delight received
" In brief sententious precepts,—while they treat
" Of fate, and chance, and change in human life;
" High actions and high passions best describing:
" Thence to the famous orators repair,

" Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
" Wielded at will that fierce democracy,
" Shook the arsenal, and fulmined over Greece,
" To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne:
" To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,
" From Heaven descended to the low-roofed house
" Of Socrates; see there his tenement,
" Whom well inspired the oracle pronounced
" Wisest of men; from whose mouth issued forth
" Mellifluous streams, that watered all the schools
" Of Academics old and new, with those
" Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect
" Epicurean, and the Stoic severe.
" These here revolve, or, as thou likest, at home,
" Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight:
" These rules will render thee a king complete
" Within thyself, much more with empire joined."
To whom our Saviour sagely thus replied:
" Think not but that I know these things, or think
" I know them not; not therefore am I short
" Of knowing what I ought: he, who receives
" Light from above, from the fountain of light,
" No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
" But these are false, or little else but dreams,—
" Conjectures,—fancies,—built on nothing firm.
" The first and wisest of them all professed
" To know this only, that he nothing knew;
" The next to fabling fell, and smooth conceits;
" A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense:
" Others in virtue placed felicity,
" But virtue joined with riches and long life;
" In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease:
" The Stoic last, in philosophic pride,
" By him called virtue; and his virtuous man,
" Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing,
" Equals to God, oft shames not to prefer,
" As fearing God nor man, contemning all—
" Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
" Which, when he lists, he leaves,—or boasts he can,—
" For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,

" Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
" Alas! what can they teach, and not mislead,
" Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
" And how the world began, and how man fell
" Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
" Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
" And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
" All glory arrogate, to God give none;
" Rather accuse him under usual names,—
" Fortune and Fate,—as one regardless quite
" Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
" True Wisdom, finds her not; or, by delusion,—
" Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,—
" An empty cloud. However, many books,
" Wise men have said, are wearisome: who reads
" Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
" A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
" (And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?)
" Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
" Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself,
" Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
" And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
" As children gathering pebbles on the shore.
" Or, if I would delight my private hours
" With music or with poem; where, so soon
" As in our native language, can I find
" That solace? All our law and story strewed
" With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscribed,
" Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon
" That pleased so well our victors' ear,—declare,
" That rather Greece from us these arts derived;—
" Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
" The vices of their deities, and their own,
" In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
" Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame!
" Remove their swelling epithets, thick laid
" As varnish on a harlot's cheek; the rest,
" Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
" Will far be found unworthy to compare
" With Sion's songs,—to all true tastes excelling,—

" Where God is praised aright, and godlike men,
" The Holiest of Holies, and his saints :
" Such are from God inspired,—not such from thee,
" Unless where moral virtue is expressed
" By light of Nature, not in all quite lost.
" Their orators thou then extollst, as those
" The top of eloquence ; statists indeed,
" And lovers of their country, as may seem ;
" But herein to our prophets far beneath,
" As men divinely taught, and better teaching
" The solid rules of civil government,
" In their majestic unaffected style,
" Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
" In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
" What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so ;
" What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat :
" These only with our law best form a king."
So spake the Son of God : but Satan, now
Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent,
Thus to our Saviour with stern brow replied :
" Since neither wealth nor honour, arms nor arts,
" Kingdom nor empire pleases thee, nor aught
" By me proposed in life contemplative,
" Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
" What dost thou in this world? The wilderness
" For thee is fittest place ; I found thee there,
" And thither will return thee : yet remember
" What I foretell thee : soon thou shalt have cause
" To wish thou never hadst rejected, thus
" Nicely or cautiously, my offered aid,
" Which would have set thee in short time with ease
" On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
" Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season,
" When prophecies of thee are best fulfilled.
" Now contrary, if I read aught in Heaven,
" Or Heaven write aught of Fate, by what the stars
" Voluminous, or single characters,
" In their conjunction met, give me to spell ;
" Sorrows, and labours, opposition, hate
" Attend thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,

" Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death :
" A kingdom they portend thee ; but what kingdom,
" Real or allegoric, I discern not,—
" Nor when ;—eternal sure, as without end,
" Without beginning ; for no date prefixed
" Directs me in the starry rubric set."
So saying, he took, (for still he knew his power
Not yet expired,) and to the wilderness
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
As daylight sunk, and brought in lowering Night,
Her shadowy offspring ;—unsubstantial both,
Privation mere of light and absent day.
Our Saviour meek, and with untroubled mind
After his airy jaunt, though hurried sore,
Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades,
Whose branching arms, thick intertwined, might shield
From dews and damps of night his sheltered head ;
But, sheltered, slept in vain ; for at his head
The Tempter watched, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturbed his sleep : and either tropic now
Gan thunder, and both ends of Heaven ; the clouds,
From many a horrid rift, abortive, poured
Fierce rain with lightning mixed,—water with fire
In ruin reconciled : nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vexed wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bowed their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer. Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God ! yet only stoodst
Unshaken ! Nor yet staid the terror there;
Infernal ghosts, and hellish furies, round
Environed thee ; some howled, some yelled, some shrieked,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Satst unappalled in calm and sinless peace !
Thus passed the Night so foul, till Morning fair
Came forth, with pilgrim steps, in amice grey ;

Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds,
And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had raised
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
And now the Sun with more effectual beams
Had cheered the face of Earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Cleared up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
To gratulate the sweet return of morn.
Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,
Was absent, after all his mischief done,
The Prince of Darkness; glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came;
Yet with no new device,—they all were spent;—
Rather by this his last affront resolved,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage
And mad despite to be so oft repelled.
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Backed on the north and west by a thick wood.
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said:
" Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God!
" After a dismal night: I heard the wrack,
" As earth and sky would mingle; but myself
" Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear them
" As dangerous to the pillared frame of Heaven,
" Or to the Earth's dark basis underneath,
" Are, to the main, as inconsiderable
" And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
" To man's less universe, and soon are gone:
" Yet, as being ofttimes noxious where they light
" On man, beast, plant,—wasteful and turbulent,—
" Like turbulences in the affairs of men,
" Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
" They oft fore-signify and threaten ill:
" This tempest at this desert most was bent;
" Of men at thee, for only thou here dwellst.
" Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject

" The perfect season offered with my aid
" To win thy destined seat, but wilt prolong
" All to the push of Fate,—pursue thy way
" Of gaining David's throne, no man knows when,
" For both the when and how is nowhere told?
" Thou shalt be what thou art ordained, no doubt;
" For angels have proclaimed it, but concealing
" The time and means. Each act is rightliest done,
" Not when it must, but when it may be best:
" If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
" What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
" Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
" Ere thou of Israel's sceptre get fast hold;
" Whereof this ominous night, that closed thee round,—
" So many terrors, voices, prodigies,—
" May warn thee, as a sure foregoing sign."
So talked he, while the Son of God went on
And staid not, but in brief him answered thus:
" Me worse than wet thou findst not; other harm,
" Those terrors, which thou speakst of, did me none:
" I never feared they could, though noising loud
" And threatening nigh: what they can do, as signs
" Betokening, or ill boding, I contemn
" As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;
" Who, knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
" Obtrudest thy offered aid, that I, accepting,
" At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
" Ambitious Spirit! and wouldst be thought my God,
" And stormst refused, thinking to terrify
" Me to thy will! desist!—thou art discerned,
" And toilst in vain—nor me in vain molest!"
To whom the Fiend, now swoln with rage, replied:
" Then hear, O son of David, virgin-born!
" For 'Son of God' to me is yet in doubt;
" Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
" By all the Prophets; of thy birth at length,
" Announced by Gabriel, with the first I knew;
" And of the angelic song in Bethlehem field,
" On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.
" From that time seldom have I ceased to eye

" Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth ;
" Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred ;
" Till at the ford of Jordan, whither all
" Flocked to the Baptist, I among the rest,
" (Though not to be baptized,) by voice from Heaven
" Heard thee pronounced 'the Son of God beloved.'
" Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
" And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
" In what degree or meaning thou art called
" The Son of God—which bears no single sense.
" The Son of God I also am, or was ;
" And if I was, I am ; relation stands :
" All men are Sons of God ; yet thee I thought
" In some respect far higher so declared :
" Therefore I watched thy footsteps from that hour,
" And followed thee still on to this waste wild ;
" Where, by all best conjectures, I collect
" Thou art to be my fatal enemy :
" Good reason then, if I beforehand seek
" To understand my adversary,—who
" And what he is ;—his wisdom, power, intent ;—
" By parl or composition, truce or league,
" To win him, or win from him what I can :
" And opportunity I here have had
" To try thee, sift thee ; and confess have found thee
" Proof against all temptation, as a rock
" Of adamant, and, as a centre, firm ;
" To the utmost of mere man both wise and good,
" Not more ;—for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory,
" Have been before contemned, and may again.
" Therefore to know what more thou art than man,
" Worth naming 'Son of God' by voice from Heaven,
" Another method I must now begin."

So saying, he caught him up, and, without wing
Of hippogrif, bore through the air sublime,
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain ;
Till, underneath them, fair Jerusalem,
The holy city, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious Temple reared
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount

Of alabaster, topt with golden spires:
There, on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God; and added thus in scorn:
"There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
"Will ask thee skill: I to thy Father's house
"Have brought thee, and highest placed;—highest is best;—
"Now show thy progeny; if not to stand,
"Cast thyself down; safely, if Son of God:
"For it is written, 'He will give command
"Concerning thee to his angels: in their hands
"They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
"Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.'"
To whom thus Jesus: "Also it is written,
"'Tempt not the Lord thy God.'" He said, and stood:
But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell.
As when Earth's son, Antæus, (to compare
Small things with greatest,) in Irassa strove
With Jove's Alcides, and, oft foiled, still rose,
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joined,
Throttled at length in the air, expired and fell:
So, after many a foil, the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride,
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall.
And as that Theban monster, that proposed
Her riddle, and him who solved it not devoured;
That once found out and solved, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep:
So, struck with dread and anguish, fell the Fiend;
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought—
Joyless triumphals of his hoped success—
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell;—and straight a fiery globe
Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plumy vans received him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch, through the blithe air:
Then, in a flowery valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread

A table of celestial food, divine
Ambrosial fruits, fetched from the tree of life,
And, from the fount of life, ambrosial drink,
That soon refreshed him wearied, and repaired
What hunger, if aught hunger, had impaired,
Or thirst; and, as he fed, angelic quires
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory
Over temptation and the Tempter proud:
"True image of the Father; whether throned
"In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
"Conceiving; or, remote from Heaven, enshrined
"In fleshly tabernacle, and human form,
"Wandering the wilderness;—whatever place,
"Habit, or state, or motion,—still expressing
"The Son of God, with godlike force endued
"Against the attempter of thy Father's throne,
"And thief of Paradise! Him long of old
"Thou didst debel, and down from Heaven cast
"With all his army: now thou hast avenged
"Supplanted Adam, and, by vanquishing
"Temptation, hast regained lost Paradise,
"And frustrated the conquest fraudulent.
"He never more henceforth will dare set foot
"In Paradise to tempt; his snares are broke:
"For though that seat of earthly bliss be failed,
"A fairer Paradise is founded now
"For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,
"A Saviour, art come down to reinstall
"Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
"Of Tempter and temptation without fear.
"But thou, infernal serpent! shalt not long
"Rule in the clouds; like an autumnal star,
"Or lightning, thou shalt fall from Heaven, trod down
"Under his feet: for proof, ere this thou feelst
"Thy wound—yet not thy last and deadliest wound—
"By this repulse received, and holdst in Hell
"No triumph: in all her gates Abaddon rues
"Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe
"To dread the Son of God: he, all unarmed,
"Shall chase thee, with the terror of his voice,

" From thy demoniac holds,—possession foul,—
" Thee and thy legions; yelling they shall fly,
" And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,
" Lest he command them down into the deep,
" Bound, and to torment sent before their time.—
" Hail, Son of the Most High! heir of both worlds!
" Queller of Satan! On thy glorious work
" Now enter; and begin to save mankind!"
Thus they the Son of God, our Saviour meek,
Sung victor, and, from heavenly feast refreshed,
Brought on his way with joy: he, unobserved,
Home to his mother's house private returned.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

THE PERSONS.

SAMSON.	HARAPHA of Gath.
MANOAH, the father of Samson.	Public Officer.
DALILA, his wife.	Messenger.
	Chorus of Danites.

The Scene, before the Prison in Gaza.

THE ARGUMENT.

SAMSON made captive, blind, and now in the prison of Gaza, there to labour as in a common workhouse, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition: where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father, Manoah, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom: lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoah then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistian lords for Samson's redemption; who in the meanwhile is visited by other persons; and lastly, by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence: he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him: the Chorus yet remaining on the place. Manoah returns full of joyful hope, to procure ere long his son's deliverance, in the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterward more distinctly relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself wherewith the tragedy ends.

SAMSON AGONISTES.

SAMSON. [*Attendant leading him.*]

A LITTLE onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little farther on;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade:
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoined me,
Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw
The air imprisoned also, close and damp,—
Unwholesome draught; but here I feel amends,—
The breath of heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works; unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me; hence, with leave,
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease,—
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone,
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was,—and what am now.
O wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
Twice by an Angel, who, at last, in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an offering burned,
As in a fiery column charioting
His god-like presence, and from some great act

Or benefit revealed to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed
As of a person separate to God,
Designed for great exploits: if I must die
Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze;
To grind in brazen fetters under task
With this Heaven-gifted strength? O glorious strength
Put to the labour of a beast, debased
Lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;
Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction; what if all foretold
Had been fulfilled but through mine own default!
Whom have I to complain of but myself?
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
O'ercome with importunity and tears!
O impotence of mind, in body strong!—
But what is strength without a double share
Of wisdom!—vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtleties,—not made to rule,
But to subserve where wisdom bears command!
God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
But peace! I must not quarrel with the will
Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know:
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries;
So many, and so huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail; but chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies!—O worse than chains,

Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,—
And all her various objects of delight
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased,—
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me:
They creep, yet see; I, dark in light, exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong;
Within doors, or without, still—as a fool—
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,
Without all hope of day!
O first created beam! and thou great Word,
"Let there be light, and light was over all!"
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The sun to me is dark
And silent, as the moon,
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself; if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confined,
So obvious, and so easy to be quenched;
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,
That she might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried: but O yet more miserable!
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave—
Buried, yet not exempt,
By privilege of death and burial,
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,—
Life in captivity

Among inhuman foes.
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear
The tread of many feet steering this way;—
Perhaps my enemies who come to stare
At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,—
Their daily practice—to afflict me more.

Enter CHORUS.

This, this is he; softly a while!
Let us not break in upon him;
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,
With languished head unpropt,
As one past hope, abandoned,
And by himself given over;
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
O'erworn and soiled;—
Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
That heroic, that renowned,
Irresistible Samson? Whom unarmed
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could withstand;
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid;
Ran on embattled armies clad in iron;
And, weaponless himself,
Made arms ridiculous,—useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,
Chalybean tempered steel, and frock of mail
Adamantéan proof;
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanced,
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurned them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
Fled from his lion ramp; old warriors turned
Their plated backs under his heel,
Or grovelling soiled their crested helmets in the dust.
Then, with what trivial weapon came to hand,—
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,—
A thousand fore-skins fell, the flower of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi famous to this day.
Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulders bore,

The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar,
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old,—
No journey of a Sabbath-day, and loaded so;—
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heaven.
Which shall I first bewail,
Thy bondage, or lost sight?—
Prison within prison
Inseparably dark!
Thou art become—O worst imprisonment!—
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)
Imprisoned now indeed,
In real darkness of the body dwells,
Shut up from outward light
To incorporate with gloomy night;
For inward light, alas!
Puts forth no visual beam.
O mirror of our fickle state,
Since man on earth unparalleled!
The rarer thy example stands,
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen!
For him I reckon not in high estate,
Whom long descent of birth
Or the sphere of fortune raises;
But thee, whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
Might have subdued the earth,
Universally crowned with highest praises.

Sam. I hear the sound of words; their sense the air
Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

Chor. He speaks; let us draw nigh. Matchless in might!
The glory late of Israel, now the grief;
We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,
To visit or bewail thee; or, if better,
Counsel or consolation we may bring,—
Salve to thy sores; apt words have power to swage
The tumours of a troubled mind,
And are as balm to festered wounds.

Sam. Your coming, friends, revives me; for I learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
Bear in their superscription (of the most
I would be understood): in prosperous days
They swarm, but in advérse withdraw their head,
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends!
How many evils have inclosed me round;
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,—
Blindness,—for had I sight, confused with shame,
How could I once look up, or heave the head,
Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwrecked
My vessel trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigged; and for a word, a tear,
Fool! have divulged the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman? tell me, friends,
Am I not sung and proverbed for a fool
In every street? do they not say, How well
Are come upon him his deserts? yet why?
Immeasurable strength they might behold
In me,—of wisdom nothing more than mean;
This with the other should at least have paired,
These two proportioned ill drove me transverse.

Chor. Tax not divine disposal; wisest men
Have erred, and by bad women been deceived;
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Deject not then so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides;
Yet, truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,—
At least of thy own nation,—and as noble.

Sam. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased
Me; not my parents, that I sought to wed
The daughter of an infidel: they knew not
That which I motioned was of God; I knew
From intimate impúlse, and therefore urged
The marriage on; that by occasion hence
I might begin Israel's deliverance,
The work to which I was divinely called.

She proving false, the next I took to wife
(O that I never had! fond wish too late!)
Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,—
That specious monster, my accomplished snare!
I thought it lawful from my former act,
And the same end; still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressors; of what now I suffer
She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
Who, vanquished with a peal of words, (O weakness!)
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

Chor. In seeking just occasion to provoke
The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness:
Yet Israël still serves with all her sons.

Sam. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
On Israel's governors, and heads of tribes,
Who, seeing those great acts, which God had done
Singly by me against their conquerors,
Acknowledged not, or not at all considered
Deliverance offered: I, on the other side,
Used no ambition to commend my deeds,—
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the doer;
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length
Their lords the Philistines, with gathered powers,
Entered Judea seeking me, who then
Safe to the rock of Etham was retired;
Not flying, but forecasting in what place
To set upon them,—what advantage best:
Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent
The harass of their land, beset me round:
I willingly, on some conditions, came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
To the uncircumcised a welcome prey,
Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threads
Touched with the flame: on their whole host I flew
Unarmed, and with a trivial weapon felled
Their choicest youth; they only lived who fled.
Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possessed the towers of Gath,

And lorded over them whom they now serve:
But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty,—
Bondage with ease, than strenuous liberty;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect
Whom God hath, of his special favour, raised
As their deliverer; if he aught begin,
How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds!
Chor. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel
Their great deliverer contemned,
The matchless Gideon, in pursuit
Of Madian and her vanquished kings;
And how ingrateful Ephraim
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
Not worse than by his shield and spear,
Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
Had not his prowess quelled their pride
In that sore battle, when so many died,
Without reprieve adjudged to death,
For want of well pronouncing "Shibboleth."
Sam. Of such examples add me to the roll:
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But God's proposed deliverance not so.
Chor. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men!
Unless there be, who think not God at all:
If any be, they walk obscure;
For of such doctrine never was there school,
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.
Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
As to his own edicts found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wandering thought,
Regardless of his glory's diminution;
Till, by their own perplexities involved,
They ravel more, still less resolved,
But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine the interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript,
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to exempt
Whom so it pleases him, by choice,
From national obstriction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt;
For with his own laws he can best dispense.
He would not else—who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of the enemy just cause,
To set his people free—
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
Against his vow of strictest purity,
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste.
Down reason then! at least vain reasonings down!
Though reason here aver
That moral verdict quits her of unclean:
Unchaste was subsequent,—her stain not his.
But see! here comes thy reverend sire
With careful step, locks white as down,
Old Manoah: advise
Forthwith how thou oughtst to receive him.
Sam. Ay me! another inward grief, awaked
With mention of that name, renews the assault.

Enter MANOAH.

Brethren and men of Dan! for such ye seem,
Though in this uncouth place; if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
My son now captive, hither hath informed
Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age
Came lagging after; say if he be here?
Chor. As signal now in low dejected state,
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.
Man. O miserable change! is this the man,
That invincible Samson, far renowned,
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to angels walked their streets,
None offering fight: who, single combatant,

Duelled their armies ranked in proud array,
Himself an army,—now unequal match
To save himself against a coward armed
At one spear's length! O ever-failing trust,
In mortal strength! and oh! what not in man
Deceivable and vain! Nay, what thing good
Prayed for, but often proves our woe, our bane!
I prayed for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach; I gained a son,
And such a son as all men hailed me happy;—
Who would be now a father in my stead!
Oh! wherefore did God grant me my request,
And, as a blessing, with such pomp adorned?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest prayers,—then, given with solemn hand
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind?
For this did the angel twice descend? for this
Ordained thy nurture holy, as of plant
Select, and sacred?—glorious for a while,
The miracle of men! then, in an hour,
Insnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
Thy foes' derision, captive, poor and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves!
Alas! methinks, whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
He should not so o'erwhelm, and, as a thrall,
Subject him to so foul indignities,—
Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

Sam. Appoint not heavenly disposition, father!
Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me
But justly; I myself have brought them on,—
Sole author I, sole cause: if aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned
The mystery of God given me under pledge
Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,—
A Canaanite,—my faithless enemy.
This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,
But warned by oft experience: did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her height

Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,
And rivals? In this other was there found
More faith, who also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces vitiated with gold,
Though offered only, by the scent conceived
Her spurious first-born,—treason against me?
Thrice she assayed with flattering prayers and sighs,
And amorous reproaches, to win from me
My capital secret,—in what part my strength
Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might know;
Thrice I deluded her, and turned to sport
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly, and with what impudence,
She purposed to betray me; and (which was worse
Than undissembled hate) with what contempt
She sought to make me traitor to myself:
Yet the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,
With blandished parleys, feminine assaults,
Tongue-batteries, she surceased not, day nor night,
To storm me overwatched, and wearied out,
At times when men seek most repose and rest,
I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,—
Who, with a grain of manhood well resolved,
Might easily have shook off all her snares:
But foul effeminacy held me yoked
Her bond-slave; O indignity! O blot
To honour and religion! servile mind
Rewarded well with servile punishment!
The base degree to which I now am fallen—
These rags—this grinding—is not yet so base
As was my former servitude, ignoble,
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,—
True slavery,—and that blindness, worse than this,
That saw not how degenerately I served.

Man. I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son!
Rather, approved them not; but thou didst plead
Divine impulsion prompting how thou mightst
Find some occasion to infest our foes.
I state not that; this I am sure, our foes

Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
Their captive, and their triumph; thou the sooner
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms
To violate the sacred trust of silence
Deposited within thee; which to have kept
Tacit, was in thy power: true; and thou bear'st
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains:
This day the Philistines a popular feast
Here celebrate in Gaza; and proclaim
Great pomp and sacrifice, and praises loud
To Dagon, as their god who hath delivered
Thee, Samson! bound and blind into their hands,—
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnified; and God,
Besides whom is no god, compared with idols,
Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn
By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson! of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,—
Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
Could have befallen thee and thy father's house!

Sam. Father! I do acknowledge and confess
That I this honour, I this pomp have brought
To Dagon, and advanced his praises high
Among the Heathen round; to God have brought
Dishonour, obloquy, and oped the mouths
Of idolists, and atheists; have brought scandal
To Israel; diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense enough before
To waver, or fall off and join with idols;
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,—
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end; all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presumed,
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring

Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive, or linger, thus provoked,
But will arise, and his great name assert:
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshippers.
Man. With cause this hope relieves thee, and these words
I as a prophecy receive; for God—
Nothing more certain—will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
Thou must not, in the meanwhile here forgot,
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight,
Neglected. I already have made way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ransom: well they may by this
Have satisfied their utmost of revenge
By pains and slaveries, worse than death, inflicted
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.
Sam. Spare that proposal, father, spare the trouble
Of that solicitation; let me here,
As I deserve, pay on my punishment
And expiate, if possible, my crime,—
Shameful garrulity. To have revealed
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,—
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front!
But I God's counsel have not kept; his holy secret
Presumptuously have published, impiously—
Weakly at least, and shamefully: a sin
That Gentiles, in their parables, condemn
To their abyss and horrid pains confined.
Man. Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite,
But act not in thy own affliction, son!
Repent the sin; but, if the punishment

Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;
Or the execution leave to high disposal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself; perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;—
Who ever more approves, and more accepts
(Best pleased with humble and filial submission)
Him who, imploring mercy, sues for life,
Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due;
Which argues over-just, and self-displeased
For self-offence, more than for God offended.
Reject not then what offered means; who knows
But God hath set before us, to return thee
Home to thy country, and his sacred house,
Where thou mayst bring thy offerings, to avert
His further ire, with prayers and vows renewed?

Sam. His pardon I implore; but as for life,—
To what end should I seek it? when in strength
All mortals I excelled, and great in hopes,
With youthful courage, and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from Heaven foretold, and high exploits
Full of divine instinct, after some proof
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
The sons of Anak, famous now and blazed,
Fearless of danger, like a petty god,
I walked about admired of all, and dreaded
On hostile ground, none daring my affront:
Then, swollen with pride, into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
Softened with pleasure and voluptuous life;
At length to lay my head, and hallowed pledge
Of all my strength, in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me,—
Like a tame wether,—all my precious fleece;
Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,
Shaven, and disarmed among mine enemies.

Chor. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
Which many a famous warrior overturns,
Thou couldst repress, nor did the dancing ruby
Sparkling, out-poured, the flavour, or the smell,

Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men,
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.
Sam. Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod,
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
Thirst, and refreshed; nor envied them the grape,
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.
Chor. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health!
When God with these forbidden made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.
Sam. But what availed this temperance, not complete
Against another object more enticing?
What boots it at one gate to make defence,
And at another to let in the foe,
Effeminately vanquished? by which means,—
Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonoured, quelled,—
To what can I be useful, wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed,
But to sit idle on the household hearth,
A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,
Or pitied object; these redundant locks,
Robustious to no purpose, clustering down,
(Vain monument of strength!) till length of years,
And sedentary numbness, craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obscure?
Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,
Till vermin or the draff of servile food
Consume me, and oft invocated death
Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.
Man. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift
Which was expressly given thee to annoy them?
Better at home lie bed-rid—not only idle—
Inglorious, unemployed, with age out-worn.
But God, who caused a fountain at thy prayer
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay
After the brunt of battle, can as easy
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,

Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;
And I persuade me so; why else this strength
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
His might continues in thee not for naught,
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

Sam. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,—
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
Nor the other light of life continue long,
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:
So much I feel my genial spirits droop,—
My hopes all flat,—Nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself;
My race of glory run, and race of shame;
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

Man. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
From anguish of the mind and humours black,
That mingle with thy fancy. I however
Must not omit a father's timely care
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
By ransom, or how else: meanwhile be calm,
And healing words from these thy friends admit.

Sam. O that torment should not be confined
To the body's wounds and sores,
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, breast and reins!
But must secret passage find
To the inmost mind;
There exercise all his fierce accidents;
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense.
My griefs not only pain me
As a lingering disease;
But, finding no redress, ferment and rage,
Nor less than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
To black mortification.
Thoughts, my tormentors armed with deadly stings,
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts;

Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook, and given me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure:
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heaven's desertion.
I was his nursling once and choice delight,
His destined from the womb,
Promised by heavenly message twice descending.
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up and thrived amain;
He led me on to mightiest deeds,
Above the nerve of mortal arm,
Against the uncircumcised, our enemies:
But now hath cast me off as never known;
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provoked,
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable loss
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless;
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
No long petition,—speedy death,
The close of all my miseries, and the balm.
Chor. Many are the sayings of the wise
In ancient and in modern books enrolled,
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude:
And—to the bearing well of all calamities—
All chances incident to man's frail life,—
Consolatories writ
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,
Lenient of grief and anxious thought:
But with the afflicted, in his pangs, their sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune,
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint;
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above,—

Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
And fainting spirits uphold.
God of our fathers! what is man,
That thou towards him with hand so various,
Or might I say contrarious,
Temperest thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly, as thou rulest
The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute?
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That, wandering loose about,
Grow up and perish as the summer fly,—
Heads without name, no more remembered,—
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorned
To some great work,—thy glory,
And people's safety,—which in part they effect:
Yet toward these thus dignified thou oft,
Amidst their height of noon,
Changest thy countenance, and thy hand, with no regard
Of highest favours past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.
Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscured, which were a fair dismission,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them high;—
Unseemly falls in human eye,—
Too grievous for the trespass or omission;
Oft leavest them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived;
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ungrateful multitude.
If these they scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,—
Painful diseases and deformed;—
In crude old age,
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
The punishment of dissolute days; in fine,
Just or unjust alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this, once thy glorious champion,
The image of thy strength, and mighty minister!
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labours,—for thou canst,—to peaceful end!
But who is this? what thing of sea or land?—
Female of sex it seems,—
That so bedecked, ornate and gay,
Comes this way, sailing
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus, bound for the isles
Of Javan or Gadire,
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails filled, and streamers waving,
Courted by all the winds that hold them play;
An amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind:
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem;—
And now at nearer view, no other, certain,
Than Dalila thy wife.

Sam. My wife! my traitress: let her not come near me!

Chor. Yet on she moves—now stands and eyes thee fixed,
About to have spoke; but now, with head declined
Like a fair flower surcharged with dew, she weeps;
And words addressed seem into tears dissolved,
Wetting the borders of her silken veil:
But now again she makes address to speak.

DALILA.

With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson!
Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverse event than I foresaw),
My penance hath not slackened, though my pardon
No way assured. But conjugal affection
Prevailing over fear, and timorous doubt,
Hath led me on, desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,

If aught in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou sufferest, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash, but more unfortunate, misdeed.

Sam. Out, out hyæna! these are thy wonted arts,—
And arts of every woman false like thee,—
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray;
Then, as repentant, to submit, beseech,
And reconcilement move with feigned remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change,—
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail:
Then, with more cautious and instructed skill,
Again transgresses, and again submits;
That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,
With goodness principled not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangled with a poisonous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.

Dal. Yet hear me, Samson! not that I endeavour
To lessen or extenuate my offence;
But that on the other side, if it be weighed
By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,
Or else with just allowance counterpoised,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,—
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets,—then with like infirmity
To publish them,—both common female faults:
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is for naught,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?
To what I did, thou showedst me first the way.
But I to enemies revealed, and should not:

Nor shouldst thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,
So near related, or the same of kind,—
Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,—
The jealousy of love,—powerful of sway
In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
Caused what I did? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy; feared lest one day thou wouldst leave me
As her at Timna; sought by all means therefore
How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:
No better way I saw than by importuning
To learn thy secrets, get into my power
Thy key of strength and safety. Thou wilt say,
Why then revealed? I was assured by those
Who tempted me, that nothing was designed
Against thee but safe custody and hold:
That made for me; I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
Wailing thy absence in my widowed bed:
Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,
Mine and Love's prisoner, not the Philistines;
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love.
These reasons in love's law have passed for good,
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps:
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.
Be not unlike all others,—not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel!
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so!

Sam. How cunningly the sorceress displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!
That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,
By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, the example,

I led the way: bitter reproach, but true:
I to myself was false ere thou to me:—
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
Take to thy wicked deed; which when thou seest
Impartial, self severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
Confess it feigned: weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it,—weakness to resist
Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
With God or man will gain thee no remission.
But love constrained thee;—call it furious rage
To satisfy thy lust; love seeks to have love;
My love how couldst thou hope, who took'st the way
To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed?
In vain thou strivest to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

Dal. Since thou determinest weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had; what snares besides,
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;
Which might have awed the best-resolved of men,
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
That wrought with me: thou know'st the magistrates
And princes of my country came in person,
Solicited, commanded, threatened, urged,
Adjured by all the bonds of civil duty
And of religion; pressed how just it was,
How honourable, how glorious to entrap
A common enemy, who had destroyed
Such numbers of our nation: and the priest
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious
Dishonourer of Dagon. What had I
To oppose against such powerful arguments?

Only my love of thee held long debate,
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contést: at length that grounded maxim,
So rife and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men,—that to the public good
Private respects must yield,—with grave authority
Took full possession of me and prevailed;
Virtue,—as I thought,—truth, duty so enjoining.
Sam. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end;
In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy!
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
Far other reasonings,—brought forth other deeds.
I before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation chose thee from among
My enemies, loved thee (as too well thou knew'st),
Too well; unbosomed all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but overpowered
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;
Yet now am judged an enemy. Why then
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband,
Then, as since then, thy country's foe professed?
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country; nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection but my own;
Thou mine, not theirs: if aught against my life
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
Against the law of nature, law of nations;—
No more thy country, but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends,
For which our country is a name so dear;
Not therefore to be obeyed. But zeal moved thee!—
To please thy gods thou didst it! gods unable
To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own deity, gods cannot be;
Less therefore to be pleased, obeyed, or feared.—
These false pretexts and varnished colours failing,
Bare in thy guilt how foul must thou appear!

Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.
Sam. For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath!
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.
Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson!
Afford me place to show what recompense
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided; only what remains past cure
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
To afflict thyself in vain: though sight be lost,
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed
Where other senses want not their delights—
At home in leisure and domestic ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance to which
Eye-sight exposes, daily, men abroad.
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
With me, where my redoubled love and care
With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
May ever tend about thee to old age
With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied,
That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.
Sam. No, no, of my condition take no care!
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain:
Nor think me so unwary or accursed,
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught; I know thy trains—
Though dearly to my cost—thy gins and toils;
Thy fair enchanted cup and warbling charms
No more on me have power; their force is nulled;
So much of adder's wisdom I have learned,
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
Loved, honoured, feared me, thou alone couldst hate me—
Thy husband—slight me, sell me, and forego me;
How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child

Helpless, thence easily contemned, and scorned,
And, last, neglected! How wouldst thou insult,
When I must live uxorious, to thy will
In perfect thraldom; how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile!
This jail I count the house of liberty,
To thine,—whose doors my feet shall never enter.
Dal. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand!
Sam. Not for thy life! lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee; go with that,
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives!
Cherish thy hastened widowhood with the gold
Of matrimonial treason! so farewell!
Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To prayers than winds and seas; yet winds to seas
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore:
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,—
Eternal tempest never to be calmed.
Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate?
Bid go with evil omen, and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounced?
To mix with thy concernments I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame, if not double-faced, is double-mouthed,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds;
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild airy flight.
My name perhaps among the circumcised
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defamed,
With malediction mentioned, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced.
But in my country, where I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
I shall be named among the famousest

Of women,—sung at solemn festivals,—
Living and dead recorded,—who to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer chose
Above the faith of wedlock bands,—my tomb
With odours visited and annual flowers,—
Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim
Jaël, who with inhospitable guile
Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nailed.
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
The public marks of honour and reward
Conferred upon me for the piety
Which to my country I was judged to have shown.
At this whoever envies or repines,—
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

Chor. She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
Discovered in the end,—till now concealed.

Sam. So let her go! God sent her to debase me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

Chor. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possessed, nor can be easily
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

Sam. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end;—
Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

Chor. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
That woman's love can win, or long inherit;
But what it is, hard is to say;
Harder to hit
(Which way soever men refer it)—
Much like thy riddle, Samson! in one day
Or seven, though one should musing sit.
If any of these or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferred
Thy paranymph, worthless to thee compared,
Successor in thy bed;
Nor both so loosely disallied

Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that such outward ornament
Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinished,—judgment scant,—
Capacity not raised to apprehend
Or value what is best
In choice, but oftest to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of self-love mixed,
Of constancy no root infixed,
That either they love nothing, or not long?
Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure;
Once joined, the contrary she proves, a thorn
Intestine, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
Draws him awry enslaved
With dotage, and his sense depraved
To folly and shameful deeds, which ruin ends.
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck
Embarked with such a steers-mate at the helm?
Favoured of Heaven, who finds
One virtuous,—rarely found,—
That in domestic good combines!
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
But virtue, which breaks through all opposition,
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines, and most is acceptable above.
Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic power
Over his female in due awe;
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile she or lour:
So shall he least confusion draw
On his own life, not swayed
By female usurpation, or dismayed.
But we had best retire,—I see a storm.

Sam. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings.
Sam. Be less abstruse! my riddling days are past.
Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honeyed words! a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward; I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
Haughty as is his pile, high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither
I less conjecture than when first I saw
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way:
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.
Sam. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.
Chor. His fraught we soon shall know; he now arrives.

HARAPHA.

I come not, Samson! to condole thy chance,
As these perhaps; yet wish it had not been,
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath;
Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old
That Kiriathaïm held: thou know'st me now
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might, and feats performed
Incredible to me,—in this displeased,
That I was never present on the place
Of those encounters, where we might have tried
Each other's force in camp or listed field;
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walked about; and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report.
Sam. The way to know were not to see, but taste.
Har. Dost thou already single me? I thought
Gyves and the mill had tamed thee. O that Fortune
Had brought me to the field, where thou art famed
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw!
I should have forced thee soon with other arms,
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown:
So had the glory of prowess been recovered
To Palestine, won by a Philistine,
From the unforeskinned race, of whom thou bear'st

The highest name for valiant acts; that honour,
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.
Sam. Boast not of what thou wouldst have done, but do
What then thou wouldst;—thou seest it in thy hand.
Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain;
And thou hast need much washing to be touched.
Sam. Such usage as your honourable lords
Afford me, assassinated and betrayed,
Who durst not, with their whole united powers,
In fight withstand me single and unarmed,
Nor in the house, with chamber ambushes,
Close-banded durst attack me,—no, not sleeping,—
Till they had hired a woman with their gold,
Breaking her marriage faith, to circumvent me.
Therefore, without feigned shifts, let be assigned
Some narrow place inclosed, where sight may give thee,
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon,
Vant-brass and greves, and gauntlet; add thy spear,
A weaver's beam, and seven-times folded shield:
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
And raise such outcries on thy clattered iron,
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
That in a little time, while breath remains thee,
Thou oft shall wish thyself at Gath to boast
Again in safety what thou wouldst have done
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.
Har. Thou dost not thus disparage glorious arms,
Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,
Their ornament and safety, hād not spells,
And black enchantments, some magician's art,
Armed thee, or charmed thee strong, which thou from Heaven
Feignedst, at thy birth, was given thee in thy hair;
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
Were bristles, ranged like those that ridge the back
Of chafed wild boars, or ruffled porcupines.
Sam. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;
My trust is in the living God, who gave me

At my nativity this strength, diffused
No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,
Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn,—
The pledge of my unviolated vow.
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
Go to his temple; invocate his aid
With solemnest devotion; spread before him
How highly it concerns his glory now
To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
Which I to be the power of Israel's God
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test;
Offering to combat thee his champion bold,
With the utmost of his godhead seconded:
Then thou shalt see, or rather—to thy sorrow—
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine!

Har. Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be!
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people, and delivered up
Into thy enemies' hand; permitted them
To put out both thine eyes; and fettered send thee
Into the common prison, there to grind
Among the slaves and asses thy comrádes,
As good for nothing else,—no better service
With those thy boisterous locks,—no worthy match
For valour to assail,—nor by the sword
Of noble warrior (so to stain his honour),
But by the barber's razor best subdued.

Sam. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve, and more,—
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Justly; yet despair not of his final pardon
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant:
In confidence whereof I, once again,
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whose God is God,
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

Har. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause,
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber!

Sam. Tongue-doughty Giant! how dost thou prove me these?

Har. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
Their magistrates confessed it, when they took thee
As a league-breaker and delivered bound
Into our hands: for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
Then, like a robber, stripped them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with armèd powers thee only seeking,—
To others did no violence, nor spoil.

Sam. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe;
And in your city held my nuptial feast:
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who, threatening cruel death, constrained the bride
To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,
That solved the riddle which I had proposed.
When I perceived all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, wherever chanced,
I used hostility, and took their spoil
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords!
It was the force of conquest: force with force
Is well ejected when the conquered can.
But I, a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presumed
Single rebellion and did hostile acts!
I was no private, but a person raised
With strength sufficient and command from Heaven
To free my country; if their servile minds
Me, their deliverer sent, would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for naught,
The unworthier they! whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heaven assigned,
And had performed it, if my known offence
Hath not disabled me,—not all your force:

These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant,
Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts,
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.
Har. With thee! a man condemned, a slave enrolled,
Due by the law to capital punishment!—
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.
Sam. Camest thou for this, vain boaster! to survey me,
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
Come nearer, part not hence so slight informed;
But take good heed my hand survey not thee!
Har. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unused
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?
Sam. No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van!
My heels are fettered, but my fist is free.
Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.
Sam. Go, baffled coward! lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains,—bulk without spirit vast,—
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down
To the hazard of thy brains and shattered sides.
Har. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries in irons loaded on thee.
Chor. His Giantship is gone somewhat crest-fallen,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.
Sam. I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,
Though fame divulge him father of five sons,
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.
Chor. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
And, with malicious counsel, stir them up
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.
Sam. He must allege some cause, and offered fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not,
And that he durst not plain enough appeared.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain,
If they intend advantage of my labours,—

The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,—
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may, with mine,
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.
Chor. Oh, how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppressed,
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous, and all such as honour truth!
He all their ammunition,
And feats of war, defeats
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigour armed;
Their armories and magazines contemns,—
Renders them useless,—while
With winged expedition,
Swift as the lightning glance, he executes
His errand on the wicked, who, surprised,
Lose their defence, distracted and amazed.
But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints,—the trial of their fortitude,—
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all
That Tyranny or Fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson! with might indued
Above the sons of men; but sight bereaved
May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown.
This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Labouring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands.

And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,
For I descry this way
Some other tending; in his hand
A sceptre or quaint staff he bears,
Comes on amain, speed in his look.
By his habit I discern him now
A public officer, and now at hand.
His message will be short and voluble.

OFFICER.

Hebrews! the prisoner Samson here I seek.
Chor. His manacles remark him,—there he sits.
Off. Samson! to thee our lords thus bid me say:
This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games;
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
And now some public proof thereof require
To honour this great feast, and great assembly:
Rise therefore with all speed and come along,
Where I will see thee heartened, and fresh clad,
To appear as fits before th' illustrious lords.
Sam. Thou know'st I am a Hebrew, therefore tell them
Our law forbids at their religious rites
My presence; for that cause I cannot come.
Off. This answer, be assured, will not content them.
Sam. Have they not sword-players, and every sort
Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
Jugglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,
But they must pick me out, with shackles tired,
And over-laboured at their public mill,
To make them sport with blind activity?
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels,
On my refusal, to distress me more,
Or make a game of my calamities?
Return the way thou camest, I will not come.
Off. Regard thyself! this will offend them highly.
Sam. Myself? my conscience and internal peace!
Can they think me so broken, so debased
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
Will condescend to such absurd commands!

Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
And, in my midst of sorrow and heart grief,
To show them feats, and play before their god!—
The worst of all indignities yet on me
Joined with extreme contempt!—I will not come.
Off. My message was imposed on me with speed,
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?
Sam. So take it with what speed thy message needs.
Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.
Sam. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.
Chor. Consider, Samson! matters now are strained
Up to the height, whether to hold or break;
He's gone; and who knows how he may report
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?
Expect another message more imperious,
More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.
Sam. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair
After my great transgression,—so requite
Favour renewed, and add a greater sin
By prostituting holy things to idols?
A Nazarite in place abominable
Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon!
Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
What act more execrably unclean, profane!
Chor. Yet with this strength thou servest the Philistines,
Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean.
Sam. Not in their idol-worship, but by labour
Honest and lawful, to deserve my food
Of those who have me in their civil power.
Chor. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.
Sam. Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds.
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon,
Not dragging? the Philistian lords command.
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, venturing to displease
God for the fear of man; and man prefer,
Set God behind: which in his jealousy
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
Yet that he may dispense with me or thee

Present in temples at idolatrous rites
For some important cause, thou needst not doubt.
Chor. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach.
Sam. Be of good courage! I begin to feel
Some rousing notions in me which dispose
To something extraördinary my thoughts.
I with this messenger will go along,
Nothing to do, be sure that may dishonour
Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
If there be aught of presage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last.
Chor. In time thou hast resolved, the man returns.
Off. Samson! this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say:—"Art thou our slave,
"Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
"And darest thou at our sending and command
"Dispute thy coming? come without delay;
"Or we shall find such engines to assail
"And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
"Though thou wert firmlier fastened than a rock."
Sam. I could be well content to try their art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious:
Yet, knowing their advantages too many,
Because they shall not trail me through their streets
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters' commands come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection:
And, for a life, who will not change his purpose?
(So mutable are all the ways of men!)
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
Scandalous or forbidden in our law.
Off. I praise thy resolution: doff these links:
By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.
Sam. Brethren, farewell! your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
To see me girt with friends; and how the sight
Of me as of a common enemy,

So dreaded once, may now exasperate them
I know not: lords are lordiest in their wine;
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired
With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned;
No less the people on their holy-days
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable:—
Happen what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our law, my nation, or myself,
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

Chor. Go! and the Holy One
Of Israel be thy guide
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
Great among the heathen round!
Send thee the angel of thy birth to stand
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
Rode up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield
Of fire; that Spirit, that first rushed on thee
In the camp of Dan,
Be efficacious in thee now at need!
For never was from Heaven imparted
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen.
But wherefore comes old Manoah in such haste
With youthful steps? much livelier than erewhile
He seems,—supposing here to find his son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news.

MANOAH.

Peace with you, brethren! my inducement hither
Was not at present here to find my son,
By order of the lords new parted hence
To come and play before them at their feast.
I heard all as I came; the city rings,
And numbers thither flock;—I had no will,
Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.
But that which moved my coming now was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.

Chor. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
With thee; say, reverend Sire! we thirst to hear.
Man. I have attempted, one by one, the lords
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
With supplication prone and father's tears,
To accept of ransom for my son their prisoner,
Some much averse I found, and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
That part most reverenced Dagon and his priests:
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
Private reward, for which both God and state
They easily would set to sale: a third
More generous far and civil, who confessed
They had enough revenged, having reduced
Their foe to misery beneath their fears,
The rest was magnanimity to remit,
If some convenient ransom were proposed—
What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky!
Chor. Doubtless, the people shouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.
Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And numbered down: much rather I shall choose
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
And he in that calamitous prison left.
No, I am fixed not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forego
And quit: not wanting him I shall want nothing.
Chor. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons;
Thou for thy son are bent to lay out all:
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age;
Thou in old age carest how to nurse thy son,
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.
Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in the house, ennobled
With all those high exploits by him achieved,—
And on his shoulders waving down those locks,
That of a nation armed the strength contained:

And I persuade me, God had not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair,
Garrisoned round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
To use him further yet in some great service;
Not to sit idle, with so great a gift
Useless,—and thence ridiculous,—about him.
And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.
Chor. Thy hopes are not ill-founded, nor seem vain,
Of his delivery, and thy joy, thereon
Conceived, agreeable to a father's love;
In both which we, as next, participate.
Man. I know your friendly minds and—O what noise!
Mercy of heaven! what hideous noise was that!
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.
Chor. Noise call you it, or universal groan,
As if the whole inhabitation perished!
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise, —
Ruin,—destruction at the utmost point.
Man. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise:
Oh! it continues,—they have slain my son!
Chor. Thy son is rather slaying them; that outcry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.
Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be;
What shall we do,—stay here or run and see?
Chor. Best keep together here, lest, running thither
We unawares run into Danger's mouth.
This evil on the Philistines is fallen;
From whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here,
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if, his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way!
Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.
Chor. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old: what hinders now?
Man. He can, I know, but doubt to think he will;

Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.
Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.
And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.

MESSENGER.

O whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
Which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold?
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But Providence, or instinct of nature, seems,
Or reason, though disturbed, and scarce consulted,
To have guided me aright, I know not how,
To thee first, reverend Manoah! and to these
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror,
So in the sad event too much concerned.
Man. The accident was loud, and here before thee
With rueful cry: yet what it was we hear not:
No preface needs; thou seest we long to know.
Mes. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.
Man. Tell us the sum; the circumstance defer.
Mes. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fallen,
All in a moment overwhelmed and fallen.
Man. Sad; but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest
The desolation of a hostile city.
Mes. Feed on that first; there may in grief be surfeit.
Man. Relate by whom.
Mes. By Samson.
Man. That still lessens
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.
Mes. Ah, Manoah! I refrain too suddenly
To utter what will come, at last, too soon;
Lest evil tidings, with too rude irruption
Hitting thy aged ear, should pierce too deep.
Man. Suspense in news is torture, speak them out!
Mes. Take then the worst in brief, Samson is dead.

Man. The worst indeed! O all my hope's defeated
To free him hence! but Death who sets all free
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceived
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of Spring
Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost!
Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first
How died he; death to life is crown or shame.
All by him fell thou say'st, by whom fell he? 1580
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?
Mes. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.
Man. Wearied with slaughter then, or how?—explain.
Mes. By his own hands.
Man. Self violence? what cause
Brought him so soon at variance with himself
Among his foes?
Mes. Inevitable cause,
At once both to destroy and be destroyed;
The edifice, where all were met to see him,
Upon their heads, and on his own, he pulled.
Man. O lastly over strong against thyself! 1590
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know; but while things yet
Are in confusion, give us if thou canst,
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
Relation more particular and distinct.
Mes. Occasions drew me early to the city,
And as the gates I entered with sun-rise,
The morning trumpets festival proclaimed
Through each high-street: little I had despatched,
When all abroad was rumoured that this day 1600
Samson should be brought forth to show the people
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games;
I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded
Not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theatre
Half-round on two main pillars vaulted high,
With seats, where all the lords, and each degree
Of sort, might sit in order to behold;

The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds, under sky might stand;
I among these aloof obscurely stood.
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
When to their sports they turned. Immediately
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In their state livery clad; before him pipes
And timbrels, on each side went armed guards,
Both horse and foot; before him and behind
Archers, and slingers, cataphracts and spears.
At sight of him, the people with a shout
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He, patient, but undaunted where they led him,
Came to the place, and what was set before him,
Which without help of eye might be assayed,
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed
All with incredible, stupendous force,
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length, for intermission sake, they led him
Between the pillars; he his guide requested
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
As over-tired to let him lean a while
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the archèd roof gave main support.
He, unsuspicious, led him; which, when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined,
And eyes fast fixed he stood, as one who prayed,
Or some great matter in his mind revolved:
At last, with head erect, thus cried aloud:—
"Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed
"I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
"Not without wonder or delight beheld:
"Now, of my own accord, such other trial
"I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater;
"As with amaze shall strike all who behold."
This uttered, straining all his nerves, he bowed:
As, with the force of winds and waters pent,
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars

With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugged, he shook, till down they came, and drew
The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,—
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this but each Philistian city round,—
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
Samson with these immixed, inevitably
Pulled down the same destruction on himself;
The vulgar only scaped who stood without.

Chor. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!
Living or dying thou hast fulfilled
The work for which thou wast foretold
To Israel, and now liest victorious
Among thy slain, self-killed,—
Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoined
Thee with thy slaughtered foes in number more
Than all thy life hath slain before.

First Semichorus.

While their hearts were jocund and sublime,
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,
Chanting their idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread who dwells
In Silo, his bright sanctuary;
Among them he a spirit of frenzy sent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urged them on with mad desire,
To call in haste for their destroyer;
They, only set on sport and play,
Unweetingly importuned
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men,
Fallen into wrath divine,
As their own ruin on themselves to invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
And with blindness internal struck.

SECOND SEMICHORUS.

But he, though blind of sight,
Despised, and thought extinguished quite,
With inward eyes illuminated,
His fiery virtue roused,
From under ashes, into sudden flame,
And as an evening dragon came,
Assailant on the perchèd roosts,
And nests in order ranged
Of tame villatic fowl; but, as an eagle,
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So Virtue, given for lost,
Depressed, and overthrown, as seemed,
Like that self-begotten bird
In the Arabian woods imbost,
That no second knows nor third,
And lay erewhile a holocaust,
From out her ashy womb now teemed,
Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
When most unactive deemed;
And, though her body die, her fame survives
A secular bird ages of lives.

Man. Come, come; no time for lamentation now,
Nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroicly hath finished
A life heroic; on his enemies
Fully revenged, hath left them years of mourning,
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
Through all Philistian bounds; to Israel
Honour hath left, and freedom,—let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;
To himself and father's house eternal fame;
And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was feared,
But favouring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt;
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

Let us go find the body where it lies
Soaked in his enemies' blood; and from the stream
With lavers pure, and cleansing herbs, wash off
The clotted gore. I, with what speed the while
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay),
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends,
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend,
With silent obsequy and funeral train,
Home to his father's house: there will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And, from his memory, inflame their breasts
To matchless valour, and adventures high:
The virgins also shall, on feastful days,
Visit his tomb with flowers; only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

Chor. All is best, though we oft doubt
What the unsearchable dispose
Of highest Wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns,
And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns,
And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent:
His servants he, with new acquist
Of true experience from this great event,
With peace and consolation hath dismissed,
And calm of mind, all passions spent.

PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE,
BEFORE JOHN EARL OF BRIDGEWATER,
THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES.

THE PERSONS.

The Attendant Spirit, afterwards in the habit of Thyrsis.	The Lady.
	First Brother.
	Second Brother.
Comus, with his crew.	Sabrina, the Nymph.

The chief Persons who presented were,

The Lord Brackley. | Mr. T. Egerton, his brother.

The Lady Alice Egerton.

COMUS.

The first Scene discovers a wild wood.—The ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends or enters.*

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aërial Spirits live ensphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call Earth; and, with low-thoughted care
Confined, and pestered in this pinfold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants
Amongst the enthronèd Gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that, by due steps, aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of Eternity:
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.
But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood, and each ebbing stream,
Took in by lot, 'twixt high and nether Jove,
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt islés,
That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadornèd bosom of the deep,
Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,
And wield their little tridents: but this isle,
The greatest and the best of all the main,

He quarters to his blue-haired deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new entrusted sceptre; but their way
Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
I was despatched for their defence and guard;
And listen why,—for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,—
From old or modern bard,—in hall or bower.
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misusèd wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's island fell: (who knows not Circè
The daughter of the Sun? whose charmèd cup
Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine);
This nymph that gazed upon his clustering locks,
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named;
Who ripe, and frolic of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood;
And in thick shelter of black shades imbowered
Excels his mother at her mighty art,
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drought of Phœbus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human countenance,

The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form—of wolf, or bear,
Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat—
All other parts remaining as they were;
And they,—so perfect is their misery,—
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before;
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore when any, favoured of high Jove,
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from Heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do: but first I must put off
These my sky-robes spun out of Iris' woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain,
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who with his soft pipe, and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch,
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion.—But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps.—I must be viewless now.

Comus enters with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering; they come in, making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.

Com. The star that bids the shepherd fold,
Now the top of Heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of Day,
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream;
And the slope Sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the East.
Meanwhile welcome Joy and Feast,

Midnight Shout and Revelry,
Tipsy Dance and Jollity!
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed,
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws in slumber lie.
We that are of purer fire
Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon, in wavering morrice, move;
And, on the tawny sands and shelves,
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain-brim,
The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;—
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come let us our rites begin!
'Tis only day-light that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
Hail Goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veiled Cotytto! to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns; mysterious dame,—
That ne'er art called but when the dragon-womb
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air,—
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou ridest with Hecatè, and befriend
Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out;
Ere the babbling eastern scout,
The nice Morn, on the Indian steep
From her cabined loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale Sun descry
Our concealed solemnity.—

Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round.

THE MEASURE.

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace
Of some chase footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright: some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms
And to my wily trains; I shall ere long
Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells into the spungy air,—
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place,
And my quaint habits, breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;—
Which must not be, for that's against my course:
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well placed words of glozing courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust,
I shall appear some harmless villager
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.—
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,
And hearken, if I may, her business here.

The LADY *enters.*

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true—
My best guide now;—methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
Such as the jocund flute, or gamesome pipe,
Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds,
When for their teeming flocks, and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the Gods amiss. I should be loth
To meet the rudeness, and swilled insolence

Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stept, as they said, to the next thicket-side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then, when the gray-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thought; 'tis likeliest
They had engaged their wandering steps too far,
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me; else, O thievish Night!
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,
That Nature hung in Heaven, and filled their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud Mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear,
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues, that syllable men's names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong-siding champion—Conscience.—
O welcome pure-eyed Faith! white-handed Hope!
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou, unblemished form of Chastity!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That he, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,

Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassailed.
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?—
I did not err, there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
I cannot halloo to my brothers; but
Such noise as I can make to be heard furthest
I'll venture, for my new enlivened spirits
Prompt me;—and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG.

Sweet Echo! sweetest nymph, that livest unseen
Within thy airy shell,
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale,
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well;
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
Oh, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave
Tell me but where,
Sweet queen of parley, daughter of the sphere!
So mayst thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies.

Com. Can any mortal mixture of Earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?—
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal Air
To testify his hidden residence:
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted Night,
At every fall smoothing the raven-down
Of Darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circè with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades
Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs,

Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,
And lap it in Elysium; Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause:
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,—
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,—
I never heard till now.—I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen.—Hail foreign wonder!
Whom, certain, these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that, in rural shrine,
Dwell'st here with Pan, or Silvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

La. Nay, gentle Shepherd! ill is lost that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears;
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my severed company,
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.

Com. What Chance, good Lady! hath bereft you thus?

La. Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.

Com. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?

La. They left me weary on a grassy turf.

Com. By falsehood? or discourtesy? or why?

La. To seek in the valley some cool, friendly spring.

Com. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?

La. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.

Com. Perhaps forestalling Night prevented them.

La. How easy my misfortune is to hit!

Com. Imports their loss, beside the present need?

La. No less than if I should my brothers lose.

Com. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

La. As smooth as Hebè's their unrazored lips.

Com. Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinkt hedger at his supper sat;
I saw them under a green, mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,

Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
Their port was more than human, as they stood:
I took it for a fairy vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play in the plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,
And, as I passed, I worshipped;—if those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to Heaven,
To help you find them.
La. Gentle villager!
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
Com. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.
La. To find out that, good Shepherd! I suppose
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well practised feet.
Com. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,
And every bosky bourn from side to side,—
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;—
And if your stray attendants be yet lodged,
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatched pallet rouse; if otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.
La. Shepherd! I take thy word,
And trust thy honest offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls,
And courts of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended: in a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence! and square my trial
To my proportioned strength. Shepherd, lead on!

The Two Brothers.

E. Bro. Unmuffle ye faint Stars! and thou fair Moon!

That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
In double night — of darkness, and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation,—visit us
With thy long leveled rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure!

Y. Bro. Or, if our eyes
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks penned in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But, oh that hapless virgin, our lost Sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her,
From the chill dew, amidst rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or against the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement, and affright;
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!

E. Bro. Peace, Brother! be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils:
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid!
Or, if they be but false alarms of fears,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in Virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)

Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retirèd Solitude,
Where with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit in the centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;—
Himself is his own dungeon.

Y. Bro. 'Tis most true,
That musing Meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his gray hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch, with unenchanted eye,
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjured in this wild, surrounding waste.—
Of night, or loneliness, it recks me not;
I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unownèd Sister.

E. Bro. I do not, Brother,
Infer, as if I thought my Sister's state

Secure, without all doubt or controversy:
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
That I incline to hope, rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint Suspicion.
My Sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine; she has hidden strength,
Which you remember not.

Y. Bro. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven?—if you mean that.

E. Bro. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own:
'Tis Chastity, my brother, Chastity:
She that has that is clad in cómplete steel,
And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of Chastity,
No savage fierce, bandit, or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity:
Yea there, where very Desolation dwells
By grots, and caverns shagged with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblenched majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say, no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,
Blue meager hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew-time,
No goblin, or swart fairy of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet? or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of Chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair, silver-shafted queen, for ever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness,
And spotted mountain pard, but set at naught
The frivolous bolt of Cupid: gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen of the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield,

That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
By rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed brute violence
With sudden adoration, and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly Chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried Angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
And, in clear dream, and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,—
The unpolluted temple of the mind,—
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal: but when Lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd, and lavish act of sin,
Lets in Defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies and imbrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults, and sepulchres,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself, by carnal sensuality,
To a degenerate and degraded state.

Y. Bro. How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh, and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.—

E. Bro. List! list! I hear
Some far off halloo break the silent air.

Y. Bro. Methought so too; what should it be?

E. Bro. For certain
Either some one like us night-foundered here,
Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

Y. Bro. Heaven keep my Sister! Again,—again,—and near!
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.
E. Bro. I'll halloo;
If he be friendly, he comes well; if not,
Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us!

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd.*

That halloo I should know, what are you? speak!
Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes else.
Spi. What voice is that? my young lord? speak again!
Y. Bro. O Brother! 'tis my father's shepherd, sure.
E. Bro. Thyrsis? whose artful strains have oft delayed
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale.
How camest thou here, good Swain? hath any ram
Slipped from the fold? or young kid lost his dam?
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook?
Spi. O my loved master's heir, and his next joy!
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, O my virgin Lady! where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?
E. Bro. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame,
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.
Spi. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.
E. Bro. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly show.
Spi. I'll tell ye; 'tis not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance),
What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse,
Of dire chimeras, and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;
For such there be,—but unbelief is blind.
Within the navel of this hideous wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,

Of Bacchus and of Circè born,—great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries;
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding Reason's mintage
Charactered in the face; this have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by in the hilly crofts,
That brow this bottom-glade, whence, night by night,
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl,
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorrèd rites to Hecate
In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits, and guileful spells,
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honey-suckle; and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till Fancy had her fill; but, ere a close,
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listened them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted steeds,
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep;
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul

Under the ribs of Death: but, oh! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honoured Lady, your dear Sister.
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear,
And oh, poor hapless nightingale, thought I,
How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place,
Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent Lady, his wished prey;
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here,—
But further know I not.

Y. Bro. O Night and Shades!
How are ye joined with Hell in triple knot,
Against the unarmèd weakness of one virgin
Alone, and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, Brother?

E. Bro. Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period
Shall be unsaid for me: against the threats
Of Malice or of Sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm,
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,—
Surprised by unjust force, but not inthralled;
Yea, even that, which Mischief meant most harm,
Shall, in the happy trial, prove most glory:
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness; when, at last,
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed, and self-consumèd: if this fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And Earth's base built on stubble.—But come; let's on.

Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But for that damned Magician,—let him be girt
With all the grisly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Ind,—I'll find him out,
And force him to restore his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.

Spi. Alas! good venturous Youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;—
But here thy sword can do thee little stead;
Far other weapons, and other arms, must
Be those that quell the might of Hellish charms:
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews.

E. Bro. Why, prithee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near,
As to make this relation?

Spi. Care, and utmost shifts,
How to secure the Lady from surprisal,
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,—
Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled
In every virtuous plant and healing herb,
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray:—
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing;
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties:
Among the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he culled me out;
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;
And yet more medicinal is it than that moly

That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave;
He called it hæmony, and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew, blast, or damp,
Or ghastly furies' apparition.
I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compelled:
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised,
Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,
And yet came off: if you have this about you,
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the Necromancer's hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood,
And brandished blade rush on him; break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,
But seize his wand; though he and his cursed crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke,
Yet they will soon retire, if he but shrink.

E. Bro. Thyrsis, lead on apace, I'll follow thee;
And some good angel bear a shield before us.

The scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music: tables spread with all dainties. COMUS *appears with his rabble, and the* LADY *set in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

Com. Nay, Lady, sit! if I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or, as Daphne was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

La. Fool! do not boast;
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou hast immanacled, while Heaven sees good.

Com. Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far: see! here be all the pleasures
That Fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.

And first, behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm, and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that Nepenthes, which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,—
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs which nature lent
For gentle usage, and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,—
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,—
That have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted; but fair Virgin!
This will restore all soon.

La. 'Twill not, false traitor!
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty,
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage, and the safe abode
Thou toldst me off?—What grim aspects are these,
These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With visored falsehood, and base forgery?
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
With lickerish baits fit to insnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none,
But such as are good men, can give good things,
And that which is not good, is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.

Com. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
Praising the lean and sallow abstinence.
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth

With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,—
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,—
But all to please, and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That, in their green shops, weave the smooth-haired silk
To deck her sons; and that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutched the all-worshipped ore, and precious gems
To store her children with: if all the world
Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;—
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility;
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes
The herds would over-multitude their lords,
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought diamonds
Would so imblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List lady, be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name—Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin,—must not be hoarded,—
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself;
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose,
It withers on the stalk with languished head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, in feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship;
It is for homely features to keep home,—
They had their name thence; coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply

The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the Morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts,
Think what, and be advised:—you are but young yet.
La. I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in Reason's garb.
I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments,
And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance; she—good cateress—
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare temperance:
If every just man, that now pines with want,
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pampered luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumbered with her store,
And then the Giver would be better thanked,—
His praise due paid; for swinish Gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his feeder.—Shall I go on?
Or have I said enough? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of Chastity,
Fain would I something say,—yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul to apprehend
The sublime notion, and high mystery,
That must be uttered to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,

That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence,
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced;
Yet should I try, the uncontrolled worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
And the brute earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures reared so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.
Com. She fables not; I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power;
And though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder, and the chains of Erebus,
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly.—Come, no more;
This is mere moral babble, and direct
Against the canon laws of our foundation;
I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees
And settlings of a melancholy blood:
But this will cure all straight, one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight,
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.—

The BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground; his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in: the* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *comes in.*

Spi. What, have you let the false enchanter scape?
Oh! ye mistook; ye should have snatched his wand
And bound him fast: without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixed, and motionless:
Yet stay; be not disturbed; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that ere piped on plains.
There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,
Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure;

Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enragèd stepdame Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood,
That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearlèd wrists and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall,
Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectared lavers strewed with asphodel;
And, through the porch and inlet of each sense,
Dropt in ambrosial oils till she revived,
And underwent a quick immortal change,—
Made Goddess of the river; still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin-blasts, and ill-luck signs
That the shrewd, meddling elf delights to make;
Which she with precious, vialed liquors heals;
For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song:
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard besetting need;—this will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

SONG.

Sabrina fair!
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;

Listen for dear Honour's sake;
Goddess of the Silver lake,
Listen and save!
Listen, and appear to us
In name of great Oceanus;
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestic pace;
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook;
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell;
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet;
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,
Sleeking her soft-alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;—
Rise! rise! and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have:
Listen and save!

SABRINA *rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings.*

By the rushy-fringed bank,
Where grows the willow, and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
Of turkois blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays;
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread;
Gentle Swain! at thy request
I am here.

Spi. Goddess dear!
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmèd band
Of true Virgin here distressed,
Through the force, and through the wile
Of unblest enchanter vile.

Sab. Shepherd! 'tis my office best
To help insnarèd chastity:
Brightest Lady, look on me!
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops, that from my fountain pure
I have kept, of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip;
Next, this marble venomed seat,
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold:—
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste, ere morning hour,
To wait in Amphitrité's bower.

SABRINA *descends, and the* LADY *rises out of her seat.*

Spi. Virgin! daughter of Locrine,
Sprung from old Anchises' line,
May thy brimmèd waves, for this,
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drought, or singèd air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud:
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl, and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there, thy banks upon,
With groves of myrrh, and cinnamon!

Come, Lady! while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,

Lest the Sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste, or needless sound,
Till we come to holier ground;
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wished presence; and beside
All the swains, that near abide,
With jigs and rural dance resort;
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer;—
Come, let us haste! the stars grow high;
But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The scene changes, presenting Ludlow town and the President's castle; then come in Country Dancers, after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *with the* TWO BROTHERS *and the* LADY.

SONG.

Spi. Back, Shepherds! back; enough your play,
Till next sun-shine holiday,
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise,
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns, and on the leas.

The second song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble Lord, and Lady bright!
I have brought ye new delight,
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own;
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,

And sent them here, through hard assays,
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph, in victorious dance,
O'er sensual folly, and intemperance.

The dances ended, the SPIRIT *epiloguizes.*

Spi. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where Day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky;
There I suck the liquid air
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree;
Along the crispèd shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces, and the rosy-bosomed Hours,
Thither all their bounties bring;
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west-winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and Cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew;
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List mortals, if your ear be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen:
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced,
Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranced,
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the Gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side

Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
But now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly, or I can run,
Quickly to the green Earth's end,
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend;
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals! that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free:
She can teach you how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

L'ALLEGRO.

HENCE loathed Melancholy!
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy;
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night raven sings;
There, under ebon shades, and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell!
But come, thou Goddess fair and free!
In Heaven ycleped Euphrosynè,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore;
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph! and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips, and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,
Nods, and Becks, and wreathèd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebè's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides

Come! and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And, in thy right hand, lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth! admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull Night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled Dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of Sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine:
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of Darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn,
Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn,
From the side of some hoar hill
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Some time walking, not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great sun begins his state,
Robed in flames, and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land;
And the milkmaid singeth blithe;
And the mower whets his scythe;
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures;
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;

Mountains, on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks and rivers wide:
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis, met,
Are at their savoury dinner set,
Of herbs, and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes with secure delight
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecs sound
To many a youth, and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequered shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holy-day,
Till the live-long day-light fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How fairy Mab the junkets eat:
She was pinched and pulled, she said,
And he, by friar's lantern led;
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat,
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down the lubber fiend,
And stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,

And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towerèd cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men;
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of Peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit, or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And Pomp, and Feast, and Revelry,
With Mask, and antique Pageantry;—
Such sights as youthful poets dream,
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on;
Or sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native-wood notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal Verse;
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning;
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half regained Eurydice.—
'These delights, if thou canst give,
Mirth! with thee I mean to live.

IL PENSEROSO.

HENCE vain deluding Joys!
The brood of Folly without father bred;
How little you bestead,
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams;
Or likest hovering dreams
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train,
But hail thou Goddess, sage and holy,
Hail divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore, to our weaker view,
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;—
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended:
Yet thou art higher far descended;
Thee bright-haired Vesta, long of yore,
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she (in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain):
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
While yet there was no fear of Jove.

Come, pensive Nun! devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn,
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come! but keep thy wonted state
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commércing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till,
With a sad leaden downward cast,
Thou fix them on the earth as fast:
And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with Gods doth diet,
And hear the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing:
And add to these retirèd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure:
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring,
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke,
Gently o'er the accustomed oak:
Sweet bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chantress, oft, the woods among,
I woo to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray,
Through the Heaven's wide pathless way;

And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers, through the room,
Teach Light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm:
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds, or what vast regions hold
The mortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
And of those Demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet, or with element.
Some time let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine;
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, oh! sad Virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower!
Or bid the soul of Orphēūs sing
Such notes, as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what Love did seek!
Or call up him that left half-told,
The story of Cambuscan bold,

Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canacè to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass;
And of the wondrous horse of brass,
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if ought else great bards beside,
In sage and solemn tunes, have sung,
Of tourneys, and of trophies hung;
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night! oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kercheft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the Sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess! bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe, with heavèd stroke,
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from Day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep:
And let some strange mysterious Dream
Wave at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid.

And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
  But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale,
And love the high embowed roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
  And may, at last, my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit, and rightly spell
Of every star that Heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.—
These pleasures, Melancholy! give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

ARCADES.

PART OF A MASK OR ENTERTAINMENT,

Presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby, at Harefield, by some noble persons of her family, who appear on the scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song.

I. SONG.

Look Nymphs, and Shepherds look!
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook!
This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend;
Here our solemn search hath end.
Fame, that her high worth to raise,
Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise;—
Less than half we find exprest,
Envy bid conceal the rest.
Mark, what radiant state she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne,
Shooting her beams like silver threads;
This, this is she alone,
Sitting like a Goddess bright,
In the centre of her light.
Might she the wise Latona be,
Or the towerèd Cybele,
Mother of a hundred gods;
Juno dares not give her odds;
Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparalleled?

As they come forward the Genius of the wood appears, and turning towards them, speaks.

Gen. Stay, gentle Swains! for tho' in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes;
Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
Of that renowned flood, so often sung,
Divine Alphéus, who by secret sluice
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse;
And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,
Fair, silver-buskined Nymphs, as great and good;
I know, this quest of yours, and free intent,
Was all in honour and devotion meant
To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine;
And, with all helpful service, will comply
To further this night's glad solemnity;
And lead ye, where ye may more near behold
What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold;
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,
Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon:
For know, by lot from Jove I am the power
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove
With ringlets quaint, and wanton windings wove:
And all my plants I save from nightly ill
Of noisome winds, and blasting vapours chill:
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew,
And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,
Or what the cross dire-looking planet smites,
Or hurtful worm with cankered venom bites.
When Evening gray doth rise, I fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground,
And early, ere the odorous breath of Morn
Awakes the slumbering leaves, or tasseled horn
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout
With puissant words, and murmurs made to bless:
But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial Sirens' harmony,

That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round,
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
Of human mould with gross unpurgèd ear;
And yet such music worthiest were to blaze
The peerless height of her immortal praise,
Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit,
If my inferior hand or voice could hit
Inimitable sounds, yet as we go,
Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can shew,
I will assay, her worth to celebrate,
And so attend ye toward her glittering state;
Where ye may all that are of noble stem
Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.

II. SONG.

O'ER the smooth enameled green,
Where no print of step hath been,
Follow me as I sing,
And touch the warbled string,
Under the shady roof
Of branching elm star-proof.
Follow me,
I will bring you where she sits,
Clad in splendour as befits
Her deity.
Such a rural queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

III. SONG.

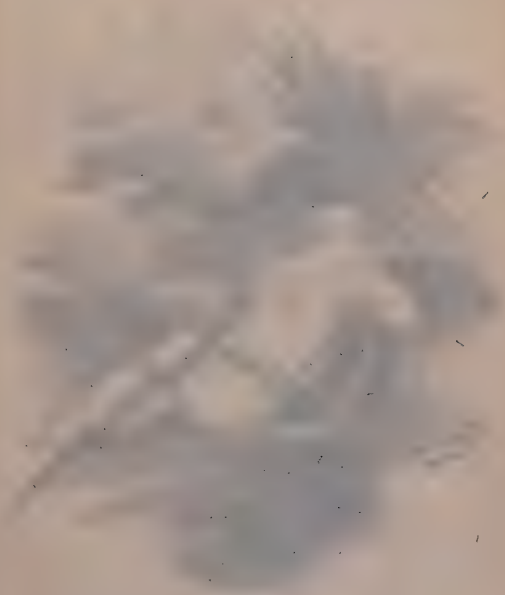
NYMPHS and Shepherds! dance no more
By sandy Ladon's lilied banks;
On old Lycæus or Cyllenè hoar
Trip no more in twilight ranks;

Through Erymanth your loss deplore,
  A better soil shall give ye thanks.
From the stony Mænalus
Bring your flocks, and live with us;
Here ye shall have greater grace,
To serve the lady of this place.
Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
  Such a rural queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

LYCIDAS.

In this monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester, on the Irish seas, 1637; and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

YET once more, O ye Laurels, and once more
Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never sere!
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And, with forced fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due:
For Lycidas is dead,—dead ere his prime,—
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin then, Sisters of the Sacred Well!
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string!
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse,
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destined urn,
And as she passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud:
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade and rill.
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn.



LYCIDAS.

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Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright,
Towards Heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Tempered to the oaten flute;
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long,
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.
But oh, the heavy change, now thou art gone!
Now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd! thee the woods, and desert caves
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen,
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white thorn blows;—
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherds' ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs! when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep,
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie;
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high;
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream:
Ay me! I fondly dream
Had ye been there,—for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,—
The Muse herself for her enchanting son,
Whom universal Nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,—
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with incessant care
To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done as others use,

To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble minds)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life.—"But not the praise,"—
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
"Nor in the glistering foil
"Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies;
"But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
"And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
"As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
"Of so much fame in Heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arèthuse! and thou honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds!
That strain I heard was of a higher mood:
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the herald of the sea
That came in Neptune's plea;
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged winds
That blows from off each beaked promontory:—
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed,
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge,
Like to that sanguine flower, inscribed with woe.
Ah! who hath reft (quoth he) my dearest pledge?

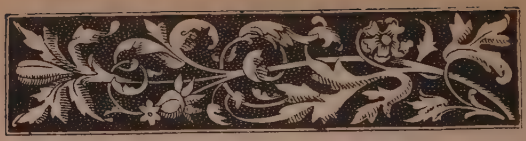
Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake:
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain;—
The golden opes, the iron shuts amain;—
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake,
How well could I have spared, for thee, young swain!
Enow of such, as for their bellies' sake
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold
Of other care they little reckoning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest;
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else, the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? what need they? they are sped;
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw:
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swollen with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said;
But that two-handed engine at the door,
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.
  Return, Alpheus! the dread voice is past,
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse!
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells, and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye Valleys low! where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honied showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,

And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid amarantus all his beauty shed,
And daffodillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! whilst thee the shores, and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;
Look homeward, Angel! now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye Dolphins! waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woful Shepherds! weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky;
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of Joy and Love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas! the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray;

He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay:
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.



POEMS

ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

(Anno Ætatis 17.)

ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT, DYING OF A COUGH.

O FAIREST flower! no sooner blown but blasted,
Soft silken primrose fading timelessly,
Summer's chief honour, if thou hadst out-lasted
Bleak Winter's force that made thy blossom dry;
For he being amorous on that lovely dye
That did thy cheek envermeil, thought to kiss,
But killed, alas, and then bewailed his fatal bliss.

For since grim Aquilo, his charioteer,
By boisterous rape the Athenian damsel got,
He thought it touched his deity full near,
If likewise he some fair one wedded not,
Thereby to wipe away the infámous blot
Of long-uncoupled bed, and childless eld,
Which 'mongst the wanton gods a foul reproach was held.

So mounting up in icy-pearled car,
Through middle empire of the freezing air
He wandered long, till thee he spied from far:
There ended was his quest, there ceased his care.
Down he descended from his snow-soft chair;
But, all unwares, with his cold-kind embrace
Unhoused thy virgin soul from her fair biding place.

Yet art thou not inglorious in thy fate;
For so Apollo, with unweeting hand,
Whilom did slay his dearly loved mate,
Young Hyacinth born on Eurotas' strand,
Young Hyacinth the pride of Spartan land;
  But then transformed him to a purple flower:
Alack that so to change thee Winter had no power.

Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,
Or that thy corse corrupts in earth's dark womb,
Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed,
Hid from the world in a low delvèd tomb;
Could Heaven for pity thee so strictly doom?
  Oh, no! for something in thy face did shine
Above mortality, that showed thou wast divine.

Resolve me then, O Soul most surely blest!
(If so it be that thou these plaints dost hear)
Tell me, bright Spirit! where'er thou hoverest,
Whether above that high first-moving sphere,
Or in the Elysian fields (if such there were),
  Oh say me true, if thou wert mortal wight,
And why from us so quickly thou didst take thy flight?

Wert thou some star which from the ruined roof
Of shaked Olympus by mischance didst fall;
Which careful Jove in Nature's true behoof
Took up, and in fit place did reinstall?
Or did of late Earth's sons besiege the wall
  Of sheeny Heaven, and thou some goddess fled
Amongst us here below to hide thy nectared head!

Or wert thou that just maid who once before
Forsook the hated earth,—Oh, tell me sooth,—
And camest again to visit us once more?
Or wert thou that sweet smiling youth?
Or that crowned matron sage white-robèd Truth?
  Or any other of that heavenly brood,
Let down in cloudy throne to do the world some good?

Or wert thou of the golden-wingèd host,
Who, having clad thyself in human weed,
To Earth from thy prefixèd seat didst post,
And after short abode fly back with speed,
As if to show what creatures Heaven doth breed,
Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
To scorn the sordid world, and unto Heaven aspire?

But oh! why didst thou not stay here below
To bless us with thy Heaven-loved innocence,
To slake his wrath whom sin hath made our foe,
To turn swift-rushing black Perdition hence
Or drive away the slaughtering Pestilence,
To stand 'twixt us and our deservèd smart?
But thou canst best perform that office where thou art.

Then thou, the mother of so sweet a child
Her false imagined loss cease to lament,
And wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild:
Think what a present thou to God hast sent,
And render him with patience what he lent;
This if thou do, he will an offspring give
That all the world's last end shall make thy name to live.

—o—

(Anno Ætatis 19.)

AT A VACATION EXERCISE IN THE COLLEGE.

Part Latin, part English. The Latin speeches ended, the English thus began:—

Hail, native Language! that by sinews weak
Didst move my first-endeavouring tongue to speak,
And madest imperfect words with childish trips,
Half-unpronounced, slide through my infant lips,
Driving dumb Silence from the portal door,
Where he had mutely sat two years before:
Here I salute thee, and thy pardon ask,
That now I use thee in my latter task:

Small loss it is that thence can come unto thee;
I know my tongue but little grace can do thee:
Thou need'st not be ambitious to be first,
Believe me, I have thither packed the worst:
And, if it happen as I did forecast,
The daintiest dishes shall be served up last.
I pray thee, then, deny me not thy aid
For this same small neglect that I have made:
But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,
And from thy wardrobe bring thy chiefest treasure;
Not those new-fangled toys, and trimming slight,
Which takes our late fantastics with delight;
But cull those richest robes, and gayest attire,
Which deepest spirits, and choicest wits desire.
I have some naked thoughts that rove about,
And loudly knock to have their passage out;
And, weary of their place, do only stay
Till thou hast decked them in thy best array;
That so they may, without suspect or fears,
Fly swiftly to this fair assembly's ears;
Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,
Thy service in some graver subject use,
Such as may make thee search thy coffers round,
Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound;
Such where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door
Look in, and see each blissful deity
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
Listening to what unshorn Apollo sings
To the touch of golden wires, while Hebè brings
Immortal nectar to her kingly sire:
Then passing through the spheres of watchful fire,
And misty regions of wide air next under,
And hills of snow, and lofts of pilèd thunder,
May tell at length how green-eyed Neptune raves,
In Heaven's defiance mustering all his waves;
Then sing of secret things that came to pass
When Beldam Nature in her cradle was;
And last, of kings and queens and heroes old,
Such as the wise Demodocus once told

In solemn songs at king Alcinous' feast,
While sad Ulysses' soul, and all the rest
Are held, with his melodions harmony,
In willing chains and sweet captivity.
But fie, my wandering Muse, how thou dost stray!
Expectance calls thee now another way:
Thou know'st it must be now thy holy bent
To keep in compass of thy predicament:
Then quick about thy purposed business come,
That to the next I may resign my room.

Then ENS *is represented as father of the Predicaments his ten sons, whereof the eldest stoop for Substance with his canons, which* ENS, *thus speaking, explains:—*

Good luck befriend thee, son! for at thy birth
The fairy ladies danced upon the hearth;
Thy drowsy nurse hath sworn she did them spy
Come tripping to the room where thou didst lie;
And, sweetly singing round about thy bed,
Strew all their blessings on thy sleeping head.
She heard them give thee this, that thou shouldst still
From eyes of mortals walk invisible;
Yet there is something that doth force my fear,
For once it was my dismal hap to hear
A Sybil old, bow-bent with crooked age,
That far events full wisely could presage,
And in Time's long and dark prospective glass
Foresaw what future days should bring to pass;
Your son, said she,—nor can you it prevent,—
Shall subject be to many an accident;
O'er all his brethren he shall reign as king,
Yet every one shall make him underling;
And those that cannot live from him asunder,
Ungratefully shall strive to keep him under,
In worth and excellence he shall out-go them,
Yet being above them, he shall be below them;
From others he shall stand in need of nothing.
Yet on his brother shall depend for clothing.
To find a foe it shall not be his hap,
And peace shall lull him in her flowery lap;
Yet shall he live in strife, and at his door

Devouring War shall never cease to roar;
Yea it shall be his natural property
To harbour those that are at enmity.
What power, what force, what mighty spell, if not
Your learned hands, can loose this Gordian knot?

The next, QUANTITY *and* QUALITY *spake in prose; then* RELATION *was called by his name.*

Rivers, arise! whether thou be the son
Of utmost Tweed, or Ouse, or gulphy Dun,
Or Trent, who, like some Earth-born giant, spreads
His thirty arms along the indented meads;
Or sullen Mole, that runneth underneath;
Or Severn swift, guilty of maidens' death;
Or rocky Avon, or of sedgy Lee,
Or coaly Tyne, or ancient hallowed Dee;
Or Humber loud that keeps the Scythian's name,
Or Medway smooth, or royal towered Thame.

[The rest was prose.]

—o—

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY.

[Composed 1629]

I.

THIS is the month, and this the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,
Of wedded Maid and Virgin Mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy Sages once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

II.

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

III.

Say, heavenly Muse! shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,
To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now, while the Heaven, by the sun's team untrod,
Hath took no print of the approaching light,
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

IV.

See, how from far, upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet:
Oh, run! prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessèd feet;
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the angel quire,
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.

THE HYMN.

I.

It was the winter wild,
While the Heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies:
Nature in awe to him
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

II.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw,
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

III.

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace;
She, crowned with olive green, came swiftly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes an universal peace through sea and land.

IV.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around:
The idle spear and shield were high up hung,
The hooked chariot stood,
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

V.

But peaceful was the night,
Wherein the Prince of light
His reign of peace upon the earth began:
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kissed,
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.

VI.

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence;
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often warned them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

VII.

And, though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new enlightened world no more should need;
He saw a greater sun appear
Than his bright throne, or burning axle-tree could bear.

VIII.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or e'er the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they then
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below:
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

IX.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,
As never was by mortal finger strook,
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringèd noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

X.

Nature that heard such sound,
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat, the airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling:
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.

XI.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shame-faced night arrayed
The helmèd cherubim
And sworded seraphim,
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed;
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes to Heaven's new-born Heir.

XII.

Such music, as 'tis said,
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung;
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

XIII.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
Once bless our humble ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the base of Heaven's deep organ blow;
And, with your ninefold harmony,
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

XIV.

For, if such holy song
Inwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold;
And speckled Vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous Sin will melt with earthly mould;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

XV.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

XVI.

But wisest Fate says no;
This must not yet be so:
The babe lies yet in smiling infancy,
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss;
So both himself and us to glorify:
Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,
The wakeful trump of Doom must thunder through the deep,

XVII.

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang,
While the red fire and smouldering clouds out brake:
The agèd earth aghast,
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake;
When at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.

XVIII.

And then, at last, our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins; for, from this happy day,
The old Dragon, under ground
In straiter limits bound;
Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway,
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

XIX.

The oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trace or breathèd spell
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

XX.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edgèd with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent:
With flower-inwoven tresses torn,
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

XXI.

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the Flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power foregoes his wonted seat.

XXII.

Peor and Baälim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice battered god of Palestine;
And moonèd Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine;
The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn,
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.

XXIII.

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue;
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis and Orus, and the dog Anubis haste.

XXIV.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud:
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;
Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud;
In vain with timbreled anthems dark
The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshipped ark.

XXV.

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand,
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn:
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide;
Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine!
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damned crew.

XXVI.

So when the Sun, in bed
Curtained with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail;
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave;
And the yellow-skirted Fayes
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

XXVII.

But see! the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest:
Time is, our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemèd star
Hath fixed her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending:
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed angels sit in order serviceable.

—o—

THE PASSION.

Erewhile of music, and ethereal mirth,
Wherewith the stage of air and earth did ring,
And joyous news of heavenly infant's birth,
My Muse with angels did divide to sing;
But headlong Joy is ever on the wing;
In wintry solstice like the shortened light
Soon swallowed up in dark and long out-living night.

For now to sorrow must I tune my song,
And set my harp to notes of saddest woe,
Which on our dearest Lord did seize ere long,
Dangers, and snares, and wrongs, and worse than so,
Which he for us did freely undergo:
Most perfect Hero, tried in heaviest plight
Of labours huge and hard,—too hard for human wight!

He, sovran Priest, stooping his regal head,
That dropped with odorous oil down his fair eyes,
Poor fleshly tabernacle enterèd,
His starry front low-roofed beneath the skies;
Oh, what a mask was there, what a disguise!
Yet more; the stroke of death he must abide;
Then lies him meekly down fast by his brethren's side.

These latest scenes confine my roving verse;
To this horizon is my Phœbus bound;

His godlike acts, and his temptations fierce,
And former sufferings, other where are found;
Loud o'er the rest Cremona's trump doth sound:
  Me softer airs befit, and softer strings
Of lute, or viol still, more apt for mournful things.

Befriend me, Night! best patroness of grief;
Over the pole thy thickest mantle throw,
And work my flattered fancy to belief,
That Heaven and Earth are coloured with my woe:
My sorrows are too dark for day to know:
The leaves should all be black whereon I write!
And letters, where my tears have washed, a wannish white.

See! see the chariot! and those rushing wheels,
That whirled the prophet up at Chebar flood;
My spirit some transporting cherub feels,
To bear me where the towers of Salem stood,—
Once glorious towers, now sunk in guiltless blood;
  There doth my soul in holy vision sit,
In pensive trance, and anguish, and ecstatic fit.

Mine eye hath found that sad sepulchral rock
That was the casket of Heaven's richest store;
And here, though grief my feeble hands up lock,
Yet on the softened quarry would I score
My plaining verse as lively as before;
  For sure so well instructed are my tears,
That they would fitly fall in ordered characters.

Or should I, thence hurried on viewless wing,
Take up a weeping on the mountains wild,
The gentle neighbourhood of grove and spring
Would soon unbosom all their echoes mild;
And I (for grief is easily beguiled)
  Might think the infection of my sorrows loud
Had got a race of mourners on some pregnant cloud.

This subject the Author finding to be above the years he had, when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left it unfinished.

ON TIME.

[To be set on a Clock-Case.]

Fly, envious Time! till thou run out thy race;
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;
And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,
Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross;
So little is our loss,
So little is thy gain!
For when as each thing bad thou hast entombed,
And last of all thy greedy self consumed,
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss;
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood,
When everything that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine,
With Truth, and Peace, and Love, shall ever shine
About the supreme throne
Of him, to whose happy-making sight alone
When once our heav'nly-guided soul shall climb,
Then, all this earthly grossness quit,
Attired with stars, we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee, O Time!

—o—

UPON THE CIRCUMCISION.

Ye flaming Powers, and wingèd Warriors bright!
That erst with music, and triumphant song,
First heard by happy watchful shepherds' ear,
So sweetly sung your joy the clouds along
Through the soft silence of the listening night,—
Now mourn! and, if sad share with us to bear
Your fiery essence can distil no tear,
Burn in your sighs, and borrow
Seas wept from our deep sorrow:

He who with all Heaven's heraldry whilere
Entered the world, now bleeds to give us ease;
Alas, how soon our sin
Sore doth begin
His infancy to seize!
O more exceeding love, or law more just?
Just law indeed, but more exceeding love!
For we, by rightful doom remediless,
Were lost in death, till he that dwelt above
High throned in secret bliss, for us frail dust
Emptied his glory, even to nakedness;
And that great covenant which we still transgress
Entirely satisfied;
And the full wrath beside
Of vengeful Justice bore for our excess;
And seals obedience first, with wounding smart,
This day; but, oh! ere long
Huge pangs and strong
Will pierce more near his heart.

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC.

Blest pair of Sirens! pledges of Heaven's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse!
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;
And to our high raised phantasy present
That undisturbèd song of pure concent,
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne
To him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright seraphim, in burning row,
Their loud up-lifted angel-trumpets blow;
And the cherubic host, in thousand quires,
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly;

That we on earth, with undiscording voice,
May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did, till disproportioned Sin
Jarred against Nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood,
In first obedience, and their state of good.
O may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long
To his celestial concert us unite,
To live with him, and sing in endless morn of light.

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER.

This rich marble doth inter
The honoured wife of Winchester,
A Viscount's daughter, an Earl's heir,
Besides what her virtues fair
Added to her noble birth,
More than she could own from earth.
Summers three times eight save one
She had told; alas! too soon,
After so short time of breath,
To house with darkness, and with death.
Yet had the number of her days
Been as complete as was her praise,
Nature and Fate had had no strife
In giving limit to her life.
Her high birth, and her graces sweet,
Quickly found a lover meet;
The virgin quire for her request
The god that sits at marriage feast:
He at their invoking came,
But with a scarce well-lighted flame;
And in his garland, as he stood,
Ye might discern a cypress bud.

Once had the early matrons run
To greet her of a lovely son;
And now with second hopes she goes,
And calls Lucina to her throes;
But, whether by mischance or blame,
Atropos for Lucina came;
And with remorseless cruelty
Spoiled at once both fruit and tree:
The hapless babe before his birth
Had burial, yet not laid in earth;
And the languished mother's womb
Was not long a living tomb.
So have I seen some tender slip,
Saved with care from Winter's nip,
The pride of her carnation train,
Plucked up by some unheedy swain,
Who only thought to crop the flower
New shot up from vernal shower;
But the fair blossom hangs the head
Sidewise, as on a dying bed;
And those pearls of dew she wears,
Prove to be presaging tears,
Which the sad Morn had let fall
On her hastening funeral.
Gentle Lady! may thy grave
Peace and quiet ever have;
After this thy travail sore
Sweet rest seize thee evermore,
That, to give the world increase,
Shortened hast thy own life's lease.
Here, beside the sorrowing
That thy noble house doth bring,
Here be tears of perfect moan
Wept for thee in Helicon,
And some flowers, and some bays,
For thy hearse, to strew the ways,
Sent thee from the banks of Came,
Devoted to thy virtuous name;
Whilst thou, bright Saint! high sitst in glory,
Next her,—much like to thee in story,—

That fair Syrian shepherdess,
Who, after years of barrenness,
The highly-favoured Joseph bore
To him that served for her before;
And at her next birth, much like thee,
Through pangs fled to felicity,
Far within the bosom bright
Of blazing Majesty and Light:
There with thee, new welcome Saint,
Like fortunes may her soul acquaint,—
With thee there clad in radiant sheen,
No Marchioness, but now a Queen.

—o—

SONG ON MAY MORNING.

Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose.
Hail, bounteous May! that dost inspire
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire;
Woods and groves are of thy dressing;
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

—o—

ON SHAKSPEARE. 1630.

What needs my Shakspeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in pilèd stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a starry-pointing pyramid?
Dear son of Memory! great heir of Fame!
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,
Hast built thyself a live-long monument.

For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring Art,
Thy easy numbers flow; and that each heart
Hath, from the leaves of thy unvalued book,
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;
And, so sepúlchred, in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

—o—

ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER,

Who sickened in the time of his vacancy, being forbid to go to London, by reason of the plague.

HERE lies old Hobson; Death hath broke his girt,
And here, alas! hath laid him in the dirt;
Or else, the ways being foul, twenty to one,
He's here stuck in a slough, and overthrown.
'Twas such a shifter, that, if truth were known,
Death was half glad when he had got him down;
For he had, any time this ten years full,
Dodged with him betwixt Cambridge and the Bull:
And surely Death could never have prevailed
Had not his weekly course of carriage failed;
But lately finding him so long at home,
And thinking now his journey's end was come,
And that he had ta'en up his latest inn,
In the kind office of a chamberlain
Showed him his room where he must lodge that night,
Pulled off his boots, and took away the light:
If any ask for him, it shall be said,
Hobson has supped, and's newly gone to bed.

—o—

ANOTHER ON THE SAME.

HERE lieth one, who did most truly prove
That he could never die while he could move;
So hung his destiny, never to rot
While he might still jog on and keep his trot,

Made of sphere-metal, never to decay
Until his revolution was at stay.
Time numbers motion, yet, without a crime
'Gainst old Truth, motion numbered out his time:
And, like an engine moved with wheel and weight,
His principles being ceased, he ended straight.
Rest, that gives all men life, gave him his death,
And too much breathing put him out of breath;
Nor were it contradiction to affirm,
Too long vacation hastened on his term.
Merely to drive the time away he sickened,
Fainted, and died, nor would with ale be quickened;
Nay, quoth he, on his swooning bed out-stretched,
If I mayn't carry, sure I'll ne'er be fetched;
But vow, though the cross doctors all stood hearers,
For one carrier put down to make six bearers,
Ease was his chief disease; and, to judge right,
He died for heaviness that his cart went light:
His leisure told him that his time was come,
And lack of load made his life burdensome,
That even to his last breath—there be that say't—
As he were pressed to death, he cried, "More weight;"
But, had his doings lasted as they were,
He had been an immortal carrier.
Obedient to the moon, he spent his date
In course reciprocal, and had his fate
Linked to the mutual flowing of the seas;
Yet, strange to think, his wain was his increase:
His letters are delivered all and gone,
Only remains the superscription.

ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE, UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

Because you have thrown off your prelate lord,
And with stiff vows renounced his liturgy,
To seize the widowed whore Plurality
From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorred;

Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword
To force our consciences that Christ set free,
And ride us with a classic hierarchy
Taught ye by mere A. S. and Rotherford?
Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul,
Must now be named and printed Heretics,
By shallow Edwards and Scotch what-d'ye-call:
But we do hope to find out all your tricks,
Your plots and packing, worse than those of Trent;
That so the Parliament
May, with their wholesome and preventive shears,
Clip your phylacteries, though bauk your ears,
And succour our just fears,
When they shall read this clearly in your charge,
New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large.

SONNETS.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

O NIGHTINGALE! that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still;
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love. O! if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Fortell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why:
Whether the Muse, or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom show'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.

Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

—o—

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY.

Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in arms!
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
If deed of honour did thee ever please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee; for he knows the charms
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower:
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground: and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

—o—

TO A VIRTUOUS YOUNG LADY.

Lady! that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hath shunned the broad way and the green,
And with those few are eminently seen,
That labour up the hill of heavenly truth;
The better part with Mary and with Ruth
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.
Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,

And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure,
Thou, when the bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss at the mid hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, Virgin wise and pure!

TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY.

Daughter to that good Earl, once president
Of England's council, and her treasury,
Who lived in both, unstained with gold or fee,
And left them both, more in himself content,
Till sad the breaking of that Parliament
Broke him, as that dishonest victory
At Chæronea, fatal to liberty,
Killed with report that old man eloquent.
Though later born than to have known the days
Wherein your father flourished, yet by you,
Madam, methinks I see him living yet;
So well your words his noble virtues praise,
That all both judge you to relate them true,
And to possess them, honoured Margaret.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED UPON MY WRITING CERTAIN TREATISES.

A BOOK was writ of late called "Tetrachordon,"
And woven close, both matter, form, and style;
The subject new; it walked the town a while,
Numb'ring good intellects; now seldom pored on.
Cries the stall-reader, "Bless us! what a word on
A title page is this!" and some in file
Stand spelling false, while one might walk to Mile-
End Green. Why is it harder Sirs than Gordon,
Colkitto, or Macdonnel, or Galasp!
Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek,
That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.

Thy age, like ours, O Soul of Sir John Cheek!
Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
When thou taught'st Cambridge, and King Edward, Greek.

—o—

ON THE SAME.

I DID but prompt the age to quit their clogs
By the known rules of ancient liberty,
When straight a barbarous noise environs me
Of owls and cuccoos, asses, apes and dogs:
As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs
Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,
Which after held the sun and moon in fee.
But this is got by casting pearl to hogs;
That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
And still revolt when Truth would set them free.
Licence they mean when they cry Liberty;
For who loves that must first be wise and good;
But from that mark how far they rove we see
For all this waste of wealth, and loss of blood.

—o—

TO MR. H. LAWES ON HIS AIRS.

HARRY! whose tuneful and well-measured song
First taught our English music how to span
Words with just note and accent, not to scan
With Midas' ears, committing short and long;
Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,
With praise enough for Envy to look wan;
To after age thou shalt be writ the man
That with smooth air couldst humour best our tongue.
Thou honourest verse, and verse must lend her wing
To honour thee, the priest of Phœbus' quire,
That tunest their happiest lines in hymn or story.
Dantè shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF
MRS. CATHARINE THOMSON,
MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND, DECEASED DECEMBER 16, 1646.

When Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load
Of death, called life; which us from life doth sever.
Thy works, and alms, and all thy good endeavour,
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.
Love led them on; and Faith, who knew them best
Thy hand-maids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure-wings, that up they flew so drest,
And spake the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge; who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

—o—

TO THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX.

Fairfax! whose name in arms through Europe rings,
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze
And rumours loud, that daunt remotest kings;
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays
Her broken league to imp their serpent wings.
O! yet a nobler task awaits thy hand,
(For what can war, but endless war still breed?)
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed,
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

—o—

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL.

Cromwell! our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,

Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued;
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath. Yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: new foes arise
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains:
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.

TO SIR HENRY VANE, THE YOUNGER.

VANE! young in years, but in sage counsel old,—
Than whom a better senator ne'er held
The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repelled
The fierce Epirot and the African bold,—
Whether to settle peace, or to unfold
The drift of hollow states hard to be spelled;
Then to advise how War may, best upheld,
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
In all her equipage: besides to know
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have done:
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe:
Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONT.

AVENGE, O Lord! thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,

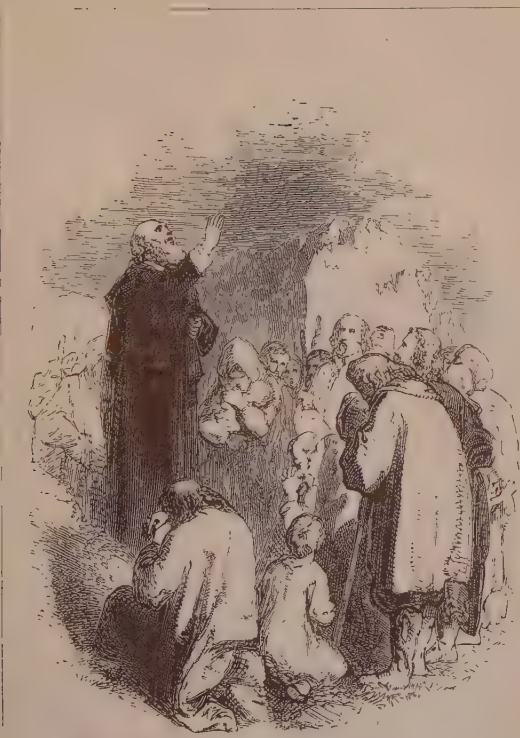
ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

... age, O Lord! the slaughtered ... of
... scattered on the Alpine mountains ...

[illegible]

[illegible]VANS! young in years, but in sage counsel

e before Egypt and the African fold,—



ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONT.

Avenge, O Lord! thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forgot not. . .

Page 495.

Forget not; in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred fold, who, having learned thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

ON HIS BLINDNESS.

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask: But patience to prevent
That murmur, soon replies:—"God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

TO MR. LAWRENCE.

LAWRENCE! of virtuous father virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won
From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire

The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

—o—

TO CYRIAC SKINNER.

Cyriac! whose grandsire on the royal bench
Of British Themis, with no mean applause
Pronounced, and in his volumes taught, our laws,
Which others at their bar so often wrench;
To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth, that, after, no repenting draws;
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intends, and what the French.
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;
For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

—o—

TO THE SAME.

Cyriac! this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot,
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year;
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer

Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, Friend, to have lost them overplied
In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe talks from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Content though blind, had I no better guide.

—o—

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE.

METHOUGHT I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the old law did save,
And such, as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came, vested all in white, pure as her mind:
Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked; she fled; and day brought back my night.

TRANSLATIONS.

THE FIFTH ODE OF HORACE, LIB. I.

Quis multo gracilis te puer in rosa, *rendered almost word for word, without rhyme, according to the Latin measure, as near as the language will permit.*

WHAT slender youth, bedewed with liquid odours,
Courts thee on roses in some pleasant cave,
  Pyrrha? for whom bind'st thou
  In wreaths thy golden hair,
Plain in thy neatness? O how oft shall he
On faith and changèd Gods complain, and seas
  Rough with black winds and storms
  Unwonted shall admire!
Who now enjoys thee credulous, all gold;
Who always vacant, always amiable
  Hopes thee, of flattering gales
  Unmindful. Hapless they
To whom thou untried seem'st fair! Me, in my vowed
Picture, the sacred wall declares to have hung
  My dark and dropping weeds
  To the stern God of sea.

FROM GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH.

BRUTUS *thus addresses* DIANA *in the country of Leogecia.*

GODDESS of shades, and huntress! who at will
Walk'st on the rolling spheres, and through the deep;

On thy third reign, the earth, look now, and tell
What land, what seat of rest, thou bidst me seek;
What certain seat, where I may worship thee
For aye, with temples vowed and virgin quires.

To whom, sleeping before the altar, DIANA *answers in a vision the same night:*

Brutus! far to the west, in the ocean wide,
Beyond the realm of Gaul, a land there lies,—
Sea-girt it lies, where giants dwelt of old;
Now void, it fits thy people: thither bend
Thy course; there shalt thou find a lasting seat;
There to thy sons another Troy shall rise,
And kings be born of thee, whose dreadful might
Shall awe the world, and conquer nations bold.

FROM DANTE.

AH, Constantine! of how much ill was cause,
Not thy conversion, but those rich domains
That the first wealthy pope received of thee!

FROM ARIOSTO.

THEN passed he to a flowery mountain green,
Which once smelt sweet, now stinks as odiously:
This was the gift, if you the truth will have,
That Constantine to good Sylvester gave.

FROM HORACE.

WHOM do we count a good man? Whom but he
Who keeps the laws and statutes of the senate,
Who judges in great suits and controversies,
Whose witness and opinion wins the cause?
But his own house, and the whole neighbourhood,
Sees his foul inside through his whited skin.

FROM EURIPIDES.

THIS is true liberty, when freeborn men,
Having to advise the public, may speak free;
Which he who can, and will, deserves high praise,
Who neither can, nor will, may hold his peace:
What can be juster in a state than this?

FROM HORACE.

—— LAUGHING, to teach the truth,
What hinders? As some teachers give to boys
Junkets and knacks, that they may learn apace.

FROM HORACE.

—— JOKING decides great things,
Stronger and better oft than earnest can.

FROM SOPHOCLES.

'TIS you that say it, not I. You do the deeds,
And your ungodly deeds find me the words.

FROM SENECA.

—— There can be slain
No sacrifice to God more acceptable,
Than an unjust and wicked king.

PSALMS.

PSALM I.

Done into verse, 1653.

BLEST is the man who hath not walked astray
In counsel of the wicked, and in the way
Of sinners hath not stood, and in the seat
Of scorners hath not sat. But in the great
Jehovah's law is ever his delight,
And in his law he studies day and night.
He shall be as a tree, which planted grows
By watery streams, and in the season knows
To yield his fruit, and his leaf shall not fall;
And what he takes in hand shall prosper all.
Not so the wicked; but as chaff which fanned
The wind drives, so the wicked shall not stand
In judgment, or abide their trial then,
Nor sinners in the assembly of just men.
For the Lord knows the upright way of the just,
And the way of bad men to ruin must.

PSALM II.

Done Aug. 8, 1653.

TERZETTE.

WHY do the Gentiles tumult, and the nations
Muse a vain thing, the kings of the earth upstand
With power, and princes in their congregations
Lay deep their plots together through each land
Against the Lord and his Messiah dear?
Let us break off, say they, by strength of hand

Their bonds, and cast from us, no more to wear
  Their twisted cords: He who in Heaven doth dwell
  Shall laugh; the Lord shall scoff them; then severe
Speak to them in his wrath, and in his fell
  And fierce ire trouble them; but I, saith he,
  Anointed have my King (though ye rebel)
On Sion, my holy hill. A firm decree
  I will declare: the Lord to me hath said,
  Thou art my Son, I have begotten thee
This day: ask of me, and the grant is made;
  As thy possession I on thee bestow
  The Heathen; and as thy conquest to be swayed
Earth's utmost bounds; them thou shalt bring full low
  With iron sceptre bruised, and them disperse
  Like to a potter's vessel shivered so.
And now be wise at length, ye Kings averse;
  Be taught, ye Judges of the earth; with fear
  Jehovah serve, and let your joy converse
With trembling; kiss the Son, lest he appear
  In anger, and ye perish in the way,
  If once his wrath take fire like fuel sere.
Happy all those who have in him their stay!

—o—

PSALM III.

Aug. 9, 1653.

WHEN HE FLED FROM ABSALOM.

LORD, how many are my foes!
How many those
  That in arms against me rise!
Many are they
That of my life distrustfully thus say,
  No help for him in God there lies.
But thou, Lord! art my shield, my glory,
Thee, through my story,
  The exalter of my head I count;
Aloud I cried
Unto Jehovah; he full soon replied
  And heard me from his holy mount.

I lay and slept; I waked again;
For my sustain
  Was the Lord. Of many millions
The populous rout
I fear not, though, encamping round about,
  They pitch against me their pavilions.
Rise, Lord! save me, my God! for thou
Hast smote ere now
  On the cheek-bone all my foes;
Of men abhorred
Hast broke the teeth. This help was from the Lord;
Thy blessing on thy people flows.

—o—

PSALM IV.

Aug. 10, 1653.

ANSWER me when I call,
  God of my righteousness!
  In straits, and in distress,
Thou didst me disenthrall
  And set at large; now spare,
Now pity me, and hear my earnest prayer.
Great ones! how long will ye
  My glory have in scorn?
  How long be thus forborn
Still to love vanity?
  To love, to seek, to prize
  Things false and vain, and nothing else but lies?
Yet know, the Lord hath chose,—
  Chose to himself apart,—
  The good and meek of heart
(For whom to choose he knows);
  Jehovah from on high
  Will hear my voice what time to him I cry.
Be awed, and do not sin;
  Speak to your hearts alone,
  Upon your beds, each one,
And be at peace within.

Offer the offerings just
Of righteousness, and in Jehovah trust.
Many there be that say
"Who yet will show us good?"
Talking like this world's brood;
But, Lord! thus let me pray,
On us lift the light,
Lift up the favour of thy countenance bright.
Into my heart more joy
And gladness thou hast put,
Than when a year of glut
Their stores doth overcloy,
And from their plenteous grounds
With vast increase their corn and wine abounds.
In peace at once will I
Both lay me down and sleep;
For thou alone dost keep
Me safe where'er I lie;
As in a rocky cell
Thou, Lord! alone in safety makest me dwell.

PSALM V.

Aug. 12, 1653.

JEHOVAH! to my words give ear,
My meditation weigh;
The voice of my complaining hear
My God and King! for unto thee I pray.
Jehovah! thou my early voice
Shalt in the morning hear;
In the morning I to thee with choice
Will rank my prayers, and watch till thou appear.
For thou art not a God that takes
In wickedness delight:
Evil with thee no biding makes;
Fools or bad men stand not within thy sight.
All workers of iniquity
Thou hatest; and them unblest

Thou wilt destroy that speak a lie;
The bloody and guileful man God doth detest.
But I will, in thy mercies dear—
Thy numerous mercies—go
Into thy house; I, in thy fear,
Will towards thy holy temple worship low.
Lord! lead me in thy righteousness;
Lead me because of those
That do observe if I transgress,
Set thy ways right before, where my step goes.
For in his faltering mouth unstable
No word is firm or sooth;
Their inside, troubles miserable;
An open grave their throat; their tongue they smooth.
God! find them guilty; let them fall
By their own counsels quelled;
Push them in their rebellions all
Still on; for against thee they have rebelled.
Then all who trust in thee shall bring
Their joy; while thou from blame
Defend'st them, they shall ever sing
And shall triúmph in thee, who love thy name.
For thou, Jehovah! wilt be found
To bless the just man still;
As with a shield thou wilt surround
Him with thy lasting favour and good will.

—o—

PSALM VI.

Aug. 13, 1653.

LORD! in thine anger do not reprehend me,
Nor in thy hot displeasure me correct;
Pity me, Lord! for I am much deject,
And very weak and faint; heal and amend me:
For all my bones that even with anguish ache,
Are troubled; yea, my soul is troubled sore;
And thou, O Lord! how long? Turn, Lord! restore
My soul; O, save me for thy goodness' sake:

For in death no remembrance is of thee;
Who in the grave can celebrate thy praise?
Wearied I am with sighing out my days,
Nightly my couch I make a kind of sea;
My bed I water with my tears; mine eye
Through grief consumes; waxen old and dark
In the midst of all mine enemies that mark.
Depart, all ye that work iniquity;
Depart from me, for the voice of my weeping
The Lord hath heard, the Lord hath heard my prayer,
My supplication with acceptance fair
The Lord will own, and have me in his keeping.
Mine enemies shall be all blank and dashed
With much confusion; then, grown red with shame,
They shall return in haste the way they came,
And in a moment shall be quite abashed.

PSALM VII.

Aug. 14, 1653.

UPON THE WORDS OF CUSH THE BENJAMITE AGAINST HIM.

LORD, my God! to thee I fly;
Save me and secure me under
Thy protection while I cry;
Lest as a lion (and no wonder)
He haste to tear my soul asunder,—
Tearing, and no rescue nigh.

Lord, my God! if I have thought
Or done this; if wickedness
Be in my hands; if I have wrought
Ill to him that meant me peace;
Or to him have rendered less,
And not freed my foe for nought;

Let the enemy pursue my soul
And overtake it; let him tread
My life down to the earth, and roll

In the dust my glory dead,—
In the dust; and there out-spread
Lodge it with dishonour foul.

Rise, Jehovah! in thine ire,
Rouse thyself, amidst the rage
Of my foes that urge like fire;
And wake for me; their fury assuage;
Judgment here thou didst engage
And command, which I desire.

So the assemblies of each nation
Will surround thee, seeking right;
Thence to thy glorious habitation
Return on high, and in their sight.
Jehovah judgeth most upright
All people from the world's foundation.

Judge me, Lord! be judge in this
According to my righteousness,
And the innocence which is
Upon me: cause at length to cease
Of evil men the wickedness,
And their power that do amiss.

But the just establish fast,
Since thou art the just God that tries
Hearts and reins. On God is cast
My defence, and in him lies,—
In him, who, both just and wise
Saves the upright of heart at last.

God is a just judge and severe,
And God is every day offended;
If the unjust will not forbear,
His sword he whets, his bow hath bended
Already, and for him intended
The tools of death, that waits him near.

(His arrows purposely made he
For them that persecute.) Behold!
He travels big with vanity;

Trouble he hath conceived of old
As in a womb, and from that mould
Hath at length brought forth a lie.

He digged a pit, and delved it deep,
And fell into the pit he made;
His mischief, that due course doth keep,
Turns on his head, and his ill trade
Of violence will, undelayed,
Fall on his crown with ruin steep.

Then will I Jehovah's praise
According to his justice raise,
And sing the name and Deity
Of Jehovah, the Most High.

—o—

PSALM VIII.

Aug. 14, 1653.

O JEHOVAH, our Lord! how wondrous great
And glorious is thy name through all the earth!
So as above the heavens thy praise to set
Out of the tender mouths of latest birth.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou
Hast founded strength because of all thy foes;
To stint the enemy, and slack the avenger's brow,
That bends his rage thy providence to oppose.

When I behold thy heavens, thy fingers' art,
The moon and stars which thou so bright hast set
In the pure firmament; then saith my heart,
O, what is man! that thou rememberest yet,

And think'st upon him; or of man begot,
That him thou visit'st, and of him art found!
Scarce to be less than gods, thou madest his lot,
With honour and with state thou hast him crowned.

O'er the works of thy hand thou madest him lord;
Thou hast put all under his lordly feet;
All flocks, and herds, by thy commanding word;
All beasts that in the field or forest meet;

Fowl of the heavens, and fish that through the wet
Sea-paths in shoals do slide, and know no dearth.
O Jehovah, our Lord! how wondrous great
And glorious is thy name through all the earth!

Nine of the Psalms done into metre, wherein all, but what is in a different character, are the very words of the text translated from the original.—*April*, 1648. J. M.

PSALM LXXX.

1 THOU, Shepherd! that dost Israel *keep*
Give ear *in time of need;*
Who leadest like a flock of sheep
Thy lovèd Joseph's seed;

That sitst between the Cherubs *bright,*
Between their wings out-spread;
Shine forth, *and from thy cloud give light,*
And on our foes thy dread.

2 In Ephraim's view and Benjamin's,
And in Manasse's sight,
Awake* thy strength, come, and *be seen*
To save us *by thy might.*

3 Turn us again, *thy grace divine*
To us, O God! *vouchsafe;*
Cause thou thy face on us to shine,
And then we shall be safe.

4 Lord God of Hosts! how long wilt thou,—
How long wilt thou declare
Thy† smoking wrath, *and angry brow*
Against thy people's pray'r!

* Gnorerah. † Gnashanta.

5 Thou feed'st them with the bread of tears,
Their bread with tears they eat,
And makest them* largely drink the tears
Wherewith their cheeks are wet.

6 A strife thou makest us *and a prey*
To every neighbour foe,
Among themselves† they laugh, they† play
And† flouts at us they throw.

7 Return us, *and thy grace divine,*
O God of Hosts! *vouchsafe;*
Cause thou thy face on us to shine,
And then we shall be safe.

8 A vine from Egypt thou hast brought,
Thy free love made it thine;
And drovest out nations, *proud and haut,*
To plant this *lovely* vine.

9 Thou didst prepare for it a place,
And root it deep and fast;
That it *began to grow apace,*
And filled the land *at last.*

10 With her *green* shade that covered *all,*
The hills were *over-spread;*
Her boughs as *high as* cedars tall
Advanced their lofty head.

11 Her branches *on the western side*
Down to the sea she sent;
And *upward* to that river *wide*
Her other branches *went.*

12 Why hast thou laid her hedges low,
And broken down her fence;
That all may pluck her, as they go,
With rudest violence?

* Shalish. † Jilgnagu.

13 The *tuskèd* boar out of the wood
Up turns it by the roots;
Wild beasts there browse, and make their food
Her grapes and tender shoots.

14 Return now, God of Hosts! look down
From Heaven, thy seat divine;
Behold *us, but without a frown,*
And visit this *thy* vine.

15 Visit this vine, which thy right hand
Hath set, and planted *long;*
And the young branch, that for thyself
Thou hast made firm and strong.

16 But now it is consumed with fire,
And cut *with axes* down;
They perish at thy dreadful ire,
At thy rebuke and frown.

17 Upon the Man of thy right hand
Let thy *good* hand be *laid;*
Upon the Son of man, whom thou
Strong for thyself hast made.

18 So shall we not go back from thee
To ways of sin and shame:
Quicken us thou, then *gladly* we
Shall call upon thy name.

19 Return us, *and thy grace divine*
Lord God of Hosts *vouchsafe;*
Cause thou thy face on us to shine,
And then we shall be safe.

——o——

PSALM LXXXI.

1 To God our strength sing loud *and clear,*
Sing loud to God *our* King;
To Jacob's God, *that all may hear,*
Loud acclamations ring.

2 Prepare a hymn, prepare a song,
The timbrel hither bring;
The *cheerful* psaltery bring along,
And harp *with* pleasant *string*.

3 Blow, *as is wont*, in the new moon
With trumpets' *lofty sound*;—
The appointed time, the day whereon
Our solemn feast *comes round*.

4 This was a statute *given of old*
For Israel *to observe*;
A law of Jacob's God, *to hold*,
From whence they might not swerve.

5 This he a testimony ordained
In Joseph, *not to change*,
When as he passed through Egypt land;
The tongue I heard was strange.

6 From burden, *and from slavish toil*,
I set his shoulder free;
His hands from pots, *and miry soil*,
Delivered were *by me*.

7 When trouble did thee sore assail,
On me then didst thou call;
And I to free thee *did not fail*,
And led thee out of thrall.

I answered thee* in thunder deep
With clouds encompassed round;
I tried thee at the water *steep*
Of Meriba *renowned*.

8 Hear, O my people! *hearken well*;
I testify to thee,
Thou ancient stock of Israel,
If thou wilt list to me:

* Be sether ragnam.

9 Throughout the land of thy abode
No alien God shall be;
Nor shalt thou to a foreign god
In honour bend thy knee.

10 I am the Lord thy God which brought
Thee out of Egypt land;
Ask large enough, and I, *besought*,
Will grant thy full demand.

11 And yet my people would not *hear*
Nor hearken to my voice;
And Israel, *whom I loved so dear*,
Misliked me for his choice.

12 Then did I leave them to their will,
And to their wandering mind;
Their own conceits they followed still,
Their own devices blind.

13 O that my people would *be wise*,
To serve me *all their days!*
And O that Israel would *advise*
To walk my *righteous* ways!

14 Then would I soon bring down their foes,
That now so proudly rise;
And turn my hand against *all those*
That are their enemies.

15 Who hate the Lord should *then be fain*
To bow to him and bend;
But *they, his people, should remain*,
Their time should have no end.

16 And he would feed them *from the shock*
With flower of finest wheat;
And satisfy them from the rock
With honey *for their meat.*

PSALM LXXXII.

1 God in the * great * assembly stands
Of kings and lordly states ;
†Among the gods,† on both his hands,
He judges and debates.

2 How long will ye ‡ pervert the right
With ‡ judgment false and wrong,
Favouring the wicked *by your might,*
Who thence grew bold and strong?

3 § Regard the § weak and fatherless ;
§ Dispatch the § poor man's cause ;
And ‖ raise the man in deep distress,
By ‖ just and equal laws.

4 Defend the poor and desolate ;
And rescue from the hands
Of wicked men the low estate
Of him *that help demands.*

5 They know not, nor will understand ;
In darkness they walk on ;
The earth's foundations all are ¶ moved,
And ¶ out of order gone.

6 I said that ye were Gods ; yea, all
The sons of God most high ;
7 But ye shall die like men, and fall
As other princes *die.*

8 Rise God ! ** judge thou the earth *in might,*
This *wicked* earth ** redress ;
For thou art he who shalt by right
The nations all possess.

* Bagnadath-el. † Bekerev. ‡ Tishpetu gnavel. § Shiphtu-dal.* ‖ Hatzdiqu. ¶ Jimmotu. ** Shophta.

PSALM LXXXIII.

1 Be not thou silent *now at length,*
O God! hold not thy peace;
Sit thou not still, O God *of strength!*
We cry, and do not cease.

2 For, lo! thy *furious* foes *now* * swell,
And * storm outrageously;
And they that hate thee *proud and fell*
Exalt their heads full high.

3 Against thy people they † contrive
‡ Their plots and counsels deep;
§ Them to ensnare they chiefly strive
‖ Whom thou dost hide and keep.

4 Come, let us cut them off, say they,
Till they no nation be,
That Israel's name for ever may
Be lost in memory.

5 For they consult ¶ with all their might;
And all, as one in mind,
Themselves against thee they unite,
And in firm union bind.

6 The tents of Edom, and the brood
Of *scornful* Ishmael;
Moab, with them of Hagar's blood,
That in the desert dwell;

7 Gebal and Ammon *there conspire,*
And *hateful* Amalek;
The Philistines, and they of Tyre,
Whose bounds the sea doth check.

* Jehemajun. ‡ Sod. ‖ Tsephuneka.
† Jagnarimu. § Jithjagnatsu gnal. ¶ Lev jachdav.

8 With them *great* Ashur also bands
And doth confirm the knot:
All these have lent their armèd hands
To aid the sons of Lot.

9 Do to them as to Midian *bold*,
That wasted all the coast;
To Sisera, and, as *is told*,
Thou didst to Jabin's *host*,

When at the brook of Kishon *old*
They were repulsed and slain;
10 At Endor quite cut off, and rolled
As dung upon the plain.

11 As Zeb and Oreb evil sped,
So let their princes speed;
As Zeba, and Zalmunna *bled*,
So let their princes *bleed*.

12 *For they*, *amidst their pride*, have said
By right now shall we seize
God's houses,* and *will now invade*
* Their stately palaces.

13 My God! O make them as a wheel,
No quiet let them find;
Giddy and *restless* let *them reel*
Like stubble from the wind.

14 As *when* an *aged* wood takes fire,
Which on a sudden strays;
The *greedy* flames run higher and higher,
Till all the mountains blaze;

15 So with thy whirlwind them pursue,
And with thy tempest chase;
16 And till they† yield thee honour due,
Lord! fill with shame their face.

* Neoth Elohim, *bears both.* † *Heb.* They seek thy Name.

17 Ashamed and troubled let them be;—
Troubled, and shamed for ever;—
Ever confounded, and so die
With shame, *and scape it never.*

18 Then shall they know that thou, whose name
Jehovah is alone,
Art the Most High, *and thou the same*
O'er all the earth *art one.*

—o—

PSALM LXXXIV.

1 How lovely are thy dwellings fair!
O Lord of Hosts! how dear
The *pleasant* tabernacles are,
Where thou dost dwell so near!

2 My soul doth long, and almost die,
Thy courts, O Lord! to see;
My heart and flesh aloud do cry,
O living God! for thee.

3 There even the sparrow, *freed from wrong,*
Hath found a house of *rest;*
The swallow there, to lay her young,
Hath built her *brooding* nest.

Even by thy altars, Lord of Hosts!
They find their safe abode;
And home they fly from round the coasts
Toward thee, my King! my God!

4 Happy, who in thy house reside!
Where thee they ever praise;
5 Happy, whose strength in thee doth bide,
And in their hearts thy ways!

6 They pass through Baca's *thirsty* vale,
That dry and barren ground;
As through a fruitful watery dale,
Where springs and showers abound.

7 They journey on from strength to strength,
With joy and gladsome cheer;
Till all before *our* God *at length*
In Sion do appear.

8 Lord God of Hosts! hear *now* my prayer,
O Jacob's God, give ear;
9 Thou God our shield! look on the face
Of thy anointed *dear.*

10 For one day in thy courts *to be*
Is better, *and more blest,*
Than *in the joys of vanity*
A thousand days *at best.*

I, in the temple of my God,
Had rather keep a door,
Than dwell in tents, *and rich abode,*
With sin *for evermore.*

11 For God the Lord, both sun and shield,
Gives grace and glory *bright;*
No good from them shall be withheld
Whose ways are just and right.

12 Lord *God* of Hosts, *that reign'st on high,*
That man is *truly* blest,
Who *only* on thee doth rely,
And in thee only rest.

—o—

PSALM LXXXV.

1 THY land to favour graciously
Thou hast not, Lord! been slack;
Thou hast from *hard* captivity
Returned Jacob back.

2 The iniquity thou didst forgive
That wrought thy people woe;
And all their sin, *that did thee grieve,*
Hast hid *where none shall know.*

3 Thine anger all thou hadst removed,
And *calmly* didst return,
From thy* fierce wrath, which we had proved
Far worse than fire to burn.

4 God of our saving health and peace!
Turn us, and us restore;
Thine indignation cause to cease
Towards us, *and chide no more.*

5 Wilt thou be angry without end?
For ever angry thus?
Wilt thou thy frowning ire extend
From age to age on us?

6 Wilt thou not† turn, and *hear our voice,*
And us again† revive?
That so thy people may rejoice
By thee preserved alive.

7 Cause us to see thy goodness, Lord!
To us thy mercy shew;
Thy saving health to us afford,
And life in us renew.

8 *And now* what God the Lord will speak,
I will *go straight and* hear;
For to his people he speaks peace,
And to his saints *full dear;*—

To his dear saints he will speak peace,
But let them never more
Return to folly, *but surcease*
To trespass as before.

9 Surely to such as do him fear
Salvation is at hand;
And glory shall *ere long appear*
To dwell within our land.

* *Heb.* The burning heat of thy wrath.
† *Heb.* Turn to quicken us.

10 Mercy and Truth *that long were missed*
Now *joyfully* are met;
Sweet Peace and Righteousness have kissed,
And hand in hand are set.

11 Truth from the earth, *like to a flower*,
Shall bud and blossom *then;*
And justice from her heavenly bower
Look down *on mortal men.*

12 The Lord will also then bestow
Whatever thing is good;
Our land shall forth in plenty throw
Her fruits *to be our food.*

13 Before him Righteousness shall go
His royal harbinger;
Then * will he come, and not be slow,
His footsteps cannot err.

—o—

PSALM LXXXVI.

1 THY *gracious* ear, O Lord, incline!
O hear me, *I thee pray!*
For I am poor, and almost pine
With need, *and sad decay.*

2 Preserve my soul, for † I have trod
Thy ways, and love the just:
Save thou thy servant, O my God!
Who *still* in thee doth trust.

3 Pity me, Lord! for daily thee
I call; 4 O make rejoice
Thy servant's soul! for, Lord! to thee
I lift my soul *and voice.*

* *Heb.* He will set his steps to the way.
† *Heb.* I am good, loving, a doer of good and holy things.

5 For thou art good; thou, Lord! art prone
To pardon; thou to all
Art full of mercy,—thou *alone*,—
To them that on thee call.

6 Unto my supplication, Lord,
Give ear! and to the cry
Of my *incessant* prayers afford
Thy hearing graciously!

7 I in the day of my distress
Will call on thee *for aid;*
For thou wilt *grant* me *free access*,
And answer *what I prayed.*

8 Like thee among the gods is none,
O Lord; nor any works,
Of all that other Gods have done,
Like to thy *glorious works.*

9 The nations all whom thou hast made
Shall come, *and all shall frame*
To bow them low before thee, Lord!
And glorify thy name.

10 For great thou art, and wonders great
By thy strong hand are doné;
Thou, *in thy everlasting seat*,
Remainest God alone.

11 Teach me, O Lord! thy way *most right:*
I in thy truth will bide;
To fear thy name my heart unite,
So shall it never slide.

12 Thee will I praise, O Lord my God!
Thee honour and adore
With my whole heart, and blaze abroad
Thy name for evermore.

13 For great thy mercy is toward me,
And thou hast freed my soul,
Even from the lowest hell set free,
From deepest darkness foul.

14 O God! the proud against me rise,
And violent men are met
To seek my life, and in their eyes
No fear of thee have set.

15 But thou, Lord! art the God most mild,
Readiest thy grace to shew;
Slow to be angry, and *art styled*
Most merciful, most true.

16 O turn to me *thy face at length!*
And me have mercy on;
Unto thy servant give thy strength,
And save thy handmaid's son.

17 Some sign of good to me afford,
And let my foes *then* see,
And be ashamed, because thou, Lord!
Dost help and comfort me.

—o—

PSALM LXXXVII.

1 AMONG the holy mountains *high*
Is his foundation fast;
There seated is his sanctuary,
His temple there is placed.

2 Sion's *fair* gates the Lord loves more
Than all the dwellings *fair*
Of Jacob's *land; though there be store,*
And all within his care.

3 City of God! most glorious things
Of thee *abroad* are spoke;
4 I mention Egypt, *where proud kings*
Did our forefathers yoke.

I mention Babel to my friends;
Philistia *full of scorn;*
And Tyre, with Ethiop's *utmost ends;*
Lo! this man there was born:

5 But *twice that praise shall in our ear*
Be said of Sion *last;*
This and this man was born in her;
High God shall fix her fast.

6 The Lord shall write it in a scroll
That ne'er shall be out-worn,
When he the nations doth inroll:
That this man there was born.

7 Both they who sing, and they who dance,
With sacred songs are there:
In thee *fresh brooks, and soft streams glance,*
And all my fountains *clear.*

—o—

PSALM LXXXVIII.

1 LORD GOD! thou dost me save and keep,
All day to thee I cry;
And all night long before thee *weep,*—
Before thee *prostrate lie.*

2 Into thy presence let my prayer
With sighs devout ascend;
And to my cries that *ceaseless are,*
Thine ear with favour bend.

3 For cloyed with woes and trouble store
Surcharged my soul doth lie;
My life, *at death's uncheerful door,*
Unto the grave draws nigh.

4 Reckoned I am with them that pass
Down to the *dismal* pit:
I am a * man; but weak, alas!
And for that name unfit.

5 From life discharged, and parted quite
Among the dead to *sleep;*
And like the slain *in blooày fight,*
That in the grave lie *deep;*

Whom thou rememberest no more,
Dost never more regard;
Them from thy hand delivered o'er
Death's hideous house hath barred.

6 Thou in the lowest pit *profound*
Hast set me *all forlorn,*—
Where thickest darkness *hovers round,*—
In horrid deeps *to mourn.*

7 Thy wrath, *from which no shelter saves,*
Full sore doth press on me;
Thou break'st upon me all thy waves;
† And all thy waves break me.

8 Thou dost my friends from me estrange,
And makest me odious,—
Me to them odious, *for they change,*
And I here pent up thus.

9 Through sorrow, and affliction great,
Mine eyes grow dim and dead:
Lord! all the day I thee intreat,
My hands to thee I spread.

10 Wilt thou do wonders on the dead?
Shall the deceased arise
And praise thee *from their loathsome bed*
With pale and hollow eyes?

* *Heb.* A man without manly strength
† *The Heb.* bears both.

11 Shall they thy loving-kindness tell
On whom the grave *hath hold?*
Or they who in perdition *dwell,*
Thy faithfulness *unfold?*

12 In darkness can thy mighty *hand,*
Or wondrous acts, be known?
Thy justice in the *gloomy* land
Of *dark* oblivion?

13 But I to thee, O Lord! do cry,
Ere yet my life be spent;
And *up to thee* my prayer *doth hie*
Each morn, and thee prevent.

14 Why wilt thou, Lord! my soul forsake,
And hide thy face from me?
15 That am already bruised and * shake
With terror sent from thee;—

Bruised, and afflicted, and *so low*
As ready to expire;
While I thy terrors undergo
Astonished with thine ire.

16 Thy fierce wrath over me doth flow;
Thy threatenings cut me through;
17 All day they round about me go,
Like waves they me pursue.

18 Lover and friend thou hast removed,
And severed from me far:
They *fly me now* whom I have loved,
And as in darkness are.

* *Heb.* Præ concussione.

A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM CXIV.

This and the following Psalm were done by the Author at fifteen years old.

WHEN the blest seed of Terah's faithful son,
After long toil, their liberty had won;
And past from Pharian fields to Canaan land,
Led by the strength of the Almighty's hand;
Jehovah's wonders were in Israel shown,
His praise and glory was in Israel known.
That saw the troubled sea, and shivering fled,
And sought to hide his froth-becurled head
Low in the earth; Jordan's clear streams recoil,
As a faint host that hath received the foil.
The high, huge-bellied mountains skip, like rams
Amongst their ewes; the little hills like lambs.
Why fled the ocean? and why skipt the mountains?
Why turned Jordan toward his crystal fountains?
Shake, Earth! and at the presence be aghast
Of Him that ever was, and aye shall last,—
That glassy floods from rugged rocks can crush,
And make soft rills from fiery flint-stones gush.

—o—

PSALM CXXXVI.

LET us, with a gladsome mind,
Praise the Lord, for he is kind:
For his mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Let us blaze his name abroad,
For of gods he is the God:
For his, &c.

O let us his praises tell,
Who doth the wrathful tyrants quell:
For his, &c.

Who, with his miracles, doth make
Amazed Heaven and Earth to shake:
For his, &c.

Who, by his wisdom, did create
The painted Heavens so full of state:
For his, &c.

Who did the solid Earth ordain
To rise above the watery plain:
For his, &c.

Who, by his all-commanding might,
Did fill the new-made world with light:
For his, &c.

And caused the golden-tressèd sun
All the day long his course to run:
For his, &c.

The hornèd moon to shine by night,
Amongst her spangled sisters bright:
For his, &c.

He, with his thunder-clasping hand,
Smote the first-born of Egypt land:
For his, &c.

And, in despite of Pharaoh fell,
He brought from thence his Israel:
For his, &c.

The ruddy waves he cleft in twain
Of the Erythræan main:
For his, &c.

The floods stood still, like walls of glass,
While the Hebrew bands did pass:
For his, &c.

But full soon they did devour
The tawny king with all his power:
For his, &c.

His chosen people he did bless
In the wasteful wilderness:
For his, &c.

In bloody battle he brought down
Kings of prowess and renown:
For his, &c.

He foiled bold Seon and his host,
That ruled the Amorrean coast:
For his, &c.

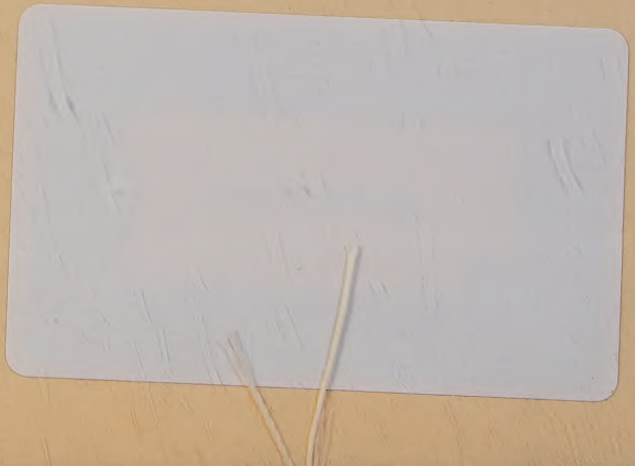
And large-limbed Og he did subdue,
With all his over-hardy crew:
For his, &c.

And to his servant Israel
He gave their land therein to dwell:
For his, &c.

He hath, with a piteous eye,
Beheld us in our misery:
For his, &c.

And freed us from the slavery
Of the invading enemy:
For his, &c.

All living creatures he doth feed,
And with full hand supplies their need:
For his, &c.

Let us therefore warble forth
His mighty majesty and worth:
For his, &c.

That his mansion hath on high
Above the reach of mortal eye:
For his mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.